

# DRAMATICS

MY 16

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An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

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Act III, Scene 1 from the play, THE CHARM SCHOOL, as staged by the Dramatic Arts Department of the Tucson, Arizona, High School (Thespian Troupe 425), with Lloyd E. Roberts as director. The players are Thespians Dale Smith and Beverly Lockett. Photograph by Reginald Russell.



AI7

# SAMUEL FRENCH

ANNOUNCES

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## In Memory of

MR. ERNEST BAVELY

Editor of DRAMATICS Magazine

Relatives, friends and representatives of the National Thespian Society deeply regret the sudden death of Mr. Ernest Bavelly on Thursday, April 13, 1950, in his 44th year.

Mr. Bavelly, a Marion county young man, and a graduate of Fairmont State College, W. Va., in the class of 1930 was one of the organizers of the National Thespians, and its first executive secretary. Under his efficient and capable direction the organization is now represented in more than 1,000 high schools in every state in the United States and many foreign countries.

Mr. Bavelly's greatest accomplishment was in the field of journalism. His work in developing the magazine of the society into a recognized journal in the field of theatre arts has attracted nationwide attention. The first issues of the journal were edited and printed in Fairmont. After moving the editorial offices to Cincinnati, Ohio, he gave the magazine the title of "Dramatics Magazine," and began publishing it monthly. Mr. Bavelly held many offices of prominence in learned societies. He was a member of the executive council of the Educational Theatre Association and the Speech Association of America.

He was recently appointed a representative to UNESCO of the United Nations Organization, as the high school representative of the educational theatre. Mr. Bavelly has contributed numerous articles on theatre arts to many educational journals. Articles written by him have appeared during the past year in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, the NEA Journal and the Journal of the High School Principals' association.

Mr. Bavelly was a member of the State college chapter of Alpha Psi Omega. He was a member of the College Hill Presbyterian church.

In Memoriam gift can be sent to Mr. Bavelly's charity, the Children's Home, 909 Plum St., Cincinnati, O.

# DRAMATICS

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# Go Find Your Audience

By GEORGE TAYLOR

Member of Editorial Board, *The Amateur Stage, London, England.*

I want to tell of a unique experiment by a small group with novel ideas and little money. Or how they toured a play on a wagon. It was an experiment in keeping with the traditions of the theatre. All students of the drama know of the birth of the English theatre, of how drama began in the Church, became secularized and was driven into the open. At first plays were performed on raised platforms, but later a two storied stage was built, set on wheels and toured from place to place. In the lower rooms the actors dressed for the performance, in the upper rooms they performed the plays to the crowds in the roads and on the village greens.

There is no need for me to go into detail about the birth of native drama except to point to it as an example to be followed in our day when there is the need for drama to make its appeal to the masses. Drama is not the monopoly of one group of people, it is for the delight of all! By taking our plays into the open we are sowing the seeds for an harvest which may be as rich and glorious as that of the Elizabethan age which itself was blossoming of those seeds sown by the medieval tradesmen with their wagon plays.

Only a small part of the great mass of medieval plays has survived and it is in one of the Wakefield Cycle, the second Shepards Play, that we first find the beginnings of individual thought and expression which foreshadowed Shakespeare. It was a reading of this play which inspired the Holmfirth Amateur Dramatic Society to take

a play on tour. Holmfirth is sixteen miles from the city of Wakefield, Yorkshire, and is situated in a long valley which slopes to the Pennines, the town nestling among the hills. The urban population of this valley has a native love of the drama which expresses itself on every little stage and platform, but it has no easy access to a theatre. The Holme Valley Comedy Players, a smaller group from the bigger society had already done much pioneering work by taking local dialect plays to the scattered village halls during the winter months, and now the bigger organization felt that this work could be extended by taking plays to a much bigger public in the manner of the medieval tradesmen. It might well have been that 450 years ago the Wakefield tradesmen brought their plays to this same valley and if so it was an invitation to do like-wise.

At first the idea was to perform the second Shepherds Play because the story was simple and the language had an affinity with the local dialect. The simple shepherds of that pastoral comedy might well have watched their sheep on the slopes of the Pennine hills and the home of Mak, the sheep-stealer, might have been any one of those old cottages perched on the rocky inclines.

In theory the performance of this play seemed ideal, but practical considerations proved it impossible. The play was written for simple-minded people and would seem slow today to an audience with wits sharpened by regular cinema-going, but even to quick-witted audiences the changes of locale would be confusing. The choice of a suitable play was governed by several important considerations. It had

to be a comedy with broad characterization if it was to hold attention and compete with traffic noises and unruly crowds. It had to have few characters and a simple setting for performance in the restricted space of a wagon. The play eventually chosen was a locally-written dialect play with situations merging into broad farce in which a small child was the unconscious cause of all the trouble. The inclusion of a child in the cast was a masterpiece of audience appeal for the crowds at every point took her to their hearts as she made her brief appearance at the end of the play. The climax of the play brings a policeman to separate the hero from his irate mother-in-law to the delight of the crowd who enjoyed the rough and tumble of a stage fight.

The play chosen, two separate casts were rehearsed so that they could play alternately during the week's run in which four performances were to be given each evening. The photograph with this article will help the reader to visualize the improvised stage on wheels, the setting, the players and the crowd. The motor was borrowed from a local textile mill and a simple box set of an ordinary living room was built upon it. A curtain was worked from one side and the proscenium front had an extension at one end which masked the man who worked the curtain and also covered the entrances and exits of the players. The window at the back gave a view of the sky as it would in a real house and the only furniture needed was a table and a few chairs. The screen in the right-hand corner of the stage was "the other room" and it also concealed the stage-manager, (myself) enabling me to control the essential properties and to act as prompter.

The players traveled in costumes and make-up and were an advertisement for the performance as circus processions are. Fortunately, the week was a fine one, but even so these high Pennine villages are windy places and at one of the highest it took four men to hold the set on the wagon as the play proceeded. Fortunately it was also that we lived in the days of the internal-combustion engine, for no team of horses could have drawn our wagon up the stony places. Even our wagon had to turn back once when the set proved too high for a low bridge.

Audiences increased in size as the week went on and they followed the situation of the play with real enjoyment. An example of the realism of the piece is best illustrated by the small boy who, carried away by the excitement, shouted a warning to the players at a critical moment of the action. The picture of the crowd conveys their intentness, especially the children, perched on their parents' shoulders. Of special interest to American audiences will be the low-roofed stone dwellings and the cloth caps of a typical Yorkshire crowd.

The players also had their share of the excitement. In addition to the pleasure which always comes from playing to appreciative audiences, they had the new experience of playing out-of-doors and of adapting themselves to conditions which made special demands on the voice, at one place they had to compete with a noisy fairground.

(Continued on next page)



Performance given by members of the Holmfirth Amateur Dramatic Society on an improvised stage on wheels. Note in particular the many children in the audience.

# Dramatic Criticism and the Men Who Write It

By TALBOT PEARSON

Director, Stage, Inc., New Orleans, La.

**A**S a race, drama critics are a tough lot. They have to be in order to withstand the counter-criticism which is constantly leveled at them by their victims and the latter's sympathizers. They long ago became inured to such taunts as "If you know so well how it should be done, why not do it yourself instead of decrying the efforts of others?" To which the classic answer which has stilled much of the clamor since it was uttered came from (I believe) George Jean Nathan. His reply was to the effect that while he could not hope to compete with a chicken in the matter of laying an egg, he considered himself a much better judge of its flavor than the fowl herself.

That is the function of criticism, colloquially stated. The general public is apt to confuse criticism with blame. The word "criticize" has unpleasant connotations for most people; it implies, quite definitely, dissatisfaction and disagreement. But dramatic criticism—and criticism of music, literature or art—really means evaluation, the expression of a personal judgment upon an opus or a performance. It can never be more than personal; no honest critic makes any claim to omniscience. He does, however, express his opinion as objectively as possible while at the same time reporting a personal impression. When a report of a performance includes some phrase like "the audience loved it" this is mere reviewing, not criticism. The reviewer is not a critic because he is reporting not his own impressions and recording his own judgment but that of other people. Definitely, this is not criticism.

## GO FIND YOUR AUDIENCE

(Continued from page 2)

I have mentioned that two casts played alternately but I must record the fact that the leading player in the part of the hero, Joe Badger, was so enamoured with his part that he insisted on playing it at every performance, a decision he was to regret in the coming weeks when at every appearance in the streets he was greeted with "Here comes Joe Badger" from all the young boys in the neighbourhood.

This idea of touring plays in the open during the summer is one which most amateur groups will find profitable. It creates an interest in drama among people who never enter a theatre from one pantomime to another. When your indoor shows are presented the following winter many of the people who saw you on tour will come to see you again. Touring plays is audience insurance which will pay big dividends!

The critic of any form of art is just as willing to throw up his hat and cheer as he is to wield the axe. A perpetual sourpuss could not continue to write and have an audience for the reason that the quality of the unexpected would have been removed from his columns. Criticism, like any other form of writing, has to be "readable", that is it has to attract readers who want to know whether the comment is favorable; it cannot continue to be either one or the other without variation. People often lose sight of this simple fact. Just as there is nothing more nauseating than the perpetual "favorable notice" which some small town papers give to every play or concert which they report, so there could be nothing more damaging to circulation and to the reviewer's job if he or she slammed everything they saw or heard with a sort of ghoulish glee. There must be standards and frames of reference, and surprise.

A friend of mine who reviews and criticizes for one of the nation's really important newspaper outside New York once broke down and explained his method. He had three or four different sets of standards, such as (a) the Broadway road company, the top flight symphony or soloist, (b) the second string ventures in those fields, (c) the ambitious civic enterprise—the civic theatre, the college symphony or the massed choir doing THE MESSIAH, and (d) the Rest. In this latter category were included all well-meaning musical and dramatic efforts which were not professionally led or directed and which deserved gentle treatment. He had another lower category into which he put the "unworthy" who either got no notice at all or found a glowing report of their efforts somewhere on the society page.

This procedure is intellectually honest but it does have some drawbacks. It presupposes a knowledge of the quadruple standard on the part of the reader, who might discover the same set of adjectives in a review of a class (a) performance that he did in one of class (b) and be led to believe that one was as good as the other. Or, that the reviewer had lost his mind. Yet reviewing of this kind, and with definite standards, is preferable to the reportorial sort of thing, where everything in the garden is lovely. Constant repetition of completely favorable notices is neither criticism nor reviewing and in the end no one bothers to read such stuff unless his own name happens to be mentioned.

It is not always easy to distinguish between criticism and reviewing. Criticism, properly speaking, applies only to an evaluation of a first performance of a play, a symphony or concerto, the first reading of a book or the first viewing of a painting or a piece of sculpture.

Professor Pearson's series of articles published in DRAMATICS this season will be reprinted in booklet form under the title, THEATRE ENJOYMENT. Copies will be available by August 1.  
—EDITOR

This definition may be stretched to include the first performance of a standard piece of music by a new performer or the revival of a play by players who have not appeared in it previously. A report by Brooks Atkinson (NEW YORK TIMES) of the current production of *As You Like It* is not properly drama criticism, for what more can be said about the most famous of all Shakespearean comedies? But this was Katherine Hepburn's first metropolitan appearance in Shakespeare, so she and the production were subject to criticism and not merely review. On the other hand a much newer play, such as *Our Town*, when done in a Kansas high school would only be reviewed. The performance and the director's treatment might well be liable to criticism but, strictly speaking, only if the approach were original or revolutionary, downright good or downright bad. And even in the last case it would be safer to call the writer's comments a form of review rather than criticism.

A reviewer's task is simpler than the critic's. The play will have been published and been the subject of comment in a host of newspapers or magazines. Perhaps the reviewer himself may have seen the original production and so have a basis for comparison. He comes to the re-production well informed as to the plot and the characters of the play. He also knows what to expect, or to hope for, in the way of settings and decor. In many ways he is a much tougher nut to crack than the members of the Critics' Circle who saw it together for the first time months ago.

The reviewer is still privileged to comment on the play, on its theme, its construction and treatment. He owes it to his readers to state clearly whether he considers it superior to some other work by the same author, or whether it does not measure up to some previous play from the same pen. He is expected to say something about the director's approach, the quality of the acting, the suitability of the settings and costumes, but not to make inviolable comparisons with the same elements of the original production. In the case of many road companies (or "National Companies" as they are now called) it is quite possible that the production will be as good or even better than the Broadway one. To discover this and to state it in print is within the province of the reviewer, but to glibly assert that a local production is "better than Broadway" is to show himself as lacking a proper critical faculty no matter how good the players may feel when they read the review. It is not reasonable to expect to find gold except at Fort Knox. Local performers are not expected to excel their professional New York brethren but they should TRY, and the reviewer's duty and privilege is to demand that they measure up to the standards of which they are capable and to call them down if they fail to do so.

Many sound arguments are constantly being advanced in favor of decentrali-

zation in the American theatre. But Broadway still remains the final arbiter and will probably remain so for some time. In order to survive, in order to bring the maximum return on the production expenses, in order to compete for the rich money prizes of Hollywood every new play must face up to the New York critics and hope for at least a majority verdict in its favor.

The baker's dozen of men who make up the New York Critics' Circle wield enormous power and influence. They are not always unanimous in their opinion about a new play and such a thing as a completely favorable reception is a rare phenomenon. Brooks Atkinson did not like the current production of *As You Like It* and said so quite bluntly. Another of the prominent critics agreed with him but the rest of the Circle acclaimed it loudly. And the public seems to be liking it, which will not worry Mr. Atkinson in the least. He has spoken his piece and taken his stand, and perhaps there will be thousands of metropolitan and suburban New Yorkers who will pay to see Miss Hepburn and her associates just because the NEW YORK TIMES' report aroused their curiosity or because they want to assert their individual opinion. Mr. Atkinson himself would be the first to emphasize that he speaks only for himself.

What then is the value of criticism if it does no more than state an individual viewpoint? First of all it must be repeated that all criticism, reviewing or reporting of artistic events must be eminently readable. It must arouse curiosity and stimulate discussion; it must set up standards, personal though they be, and insist upon these being maintained — in the writing, the acting and the production, and it must award praise and blame with the utmost impartiality and detachment.

Standards there must be, even though the downward gesture of the critics' thumbs means the loss of several hundred thousand dollars to the hopeful backers and unemployment for the actors. The devastating columns of the New York critics save the American public many millions of dollars each year by removing temptation in the form of twenty or thirty distressing exhibits. There are at least that number every year which in spite of their cost in money and effort have no place in the theatre scene. But if it were left to the press agents and columnists the theatre-goer might believe that every week brought around another "best ever" that he could not afford to miss. The New York critics are very alert watchdogs; they may occasionally bark at a friend, but very few burglars ever get through the front door.

Not everyone who makes his or her living in the New York theatre is invariably thankful for this critical protection of the public. A bad reception for a new play spells tragedy for a great number of people, and the only ones

happy about it are the backers and players of the next play on the list who have been waiting for a vacant theatre, to try *their* luck with the wielders of the critical axes.

What do critics look for in a play and a production? Surely the same as any member of the audience — entertainment, that much abused word. To be diverted agreeably is the objective of every theatre-goer, whether he pays to see burlesque, vaudeville or Milton Berle; Sheridan, Sherwood or Shakespeare. The difference between each member's enjoyment is the difference between their standards of taste and appreciation and, perhaps, between their levels of intelligence and sophistication. The professional critic interprets the entertainment value according to a personal viewpoint but he is, by training, sufficiently catholic in his receptivity not to confuse Burns and Allen with Lunt and Fontanne. Yet as these two teams are top performers in their separate fields they would be judged by, say, my reviewer-friend according to his Class A standards. George Jean Nathan has written many a laudatory review of such performers as Bert Lahr, Gracie Fields and the Marx Brothers; Wolcott Gibbs has scorched the pages of the New Yorker with his blistering comments on pompous Shakespearean revivals and shoddy musicals. They employ a different frame of reference but they expect and demand quality whether in the intellectual drama or rowdy comedy.

Most of the critics who write for the morning papers have to work at top-speed. They must leave the theatre no later than eleven and have their copy in the hands of the printer no more than two hours later. As fast as they fill a sheet, sometimes in manuscript, it is hurried to the typesetter and by the time the last words are written the proof sheets are often back again on their desk for revision and correction. By two o'clock in the morning their verdicts have been recorded beyond any chance of amendment and another costly, hope-laden theatrical venture has been either safely launched on the road to a long run and financial success or doomed to speedy withdrawal and enormous financial loss.

The others, like John Mason Brown whose criticism appears in the SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, Wolcott Gibbs of the NEW YORKER, Louis Kronenberger of TIME, and Paul Myers who writes for DRAMATICS, have longer in which to weigh their words and verdicts. But the men who write for the dailies prefer to work at white heat and few of them ever need to reverse their opinions. Their colleagues of the weeklies and the monthlies usually arrive at about the same decision even after several days of rumination.

Criticism is most valuable to the recipient when it is constructive, naturally. But Nathan, Atkinson, John Garland, George Freedley and the others are not conducting a course in playwriting, nor in acting. They are merely evaluating and recording personal impressions and the fact that they very rarely agree is ample justification for leaving things the way they are. Otherwise the playwright might fashion his next play to please Mr. Nathan and in

doing so antagonize Mr. Atkinson. The qualities which one critic will find admirable will leave the others cold. But the record shows that whenever all, or nearly all, of the Circle have uttered loud huzzas they have discovered a winner. There was unanimity about *Death of a Salesman*, and *Harvey*, and *Life With Father*, but each critic found something different that was admirable and noteworthy. In the same way a play which does not gain their approval will be found deficient in as many different aspects as there are critics to discover them.

It is neither good form nor good policy to answer back to the critical brethren. Maxwell Anderson was sufficiently ill-advised to do so a few years back and did himself no good by it. The author of MARY OF SCOTLAND, ELIZABETH THE QUEEN, WINTERSET and a dozen more excellent and successful plays, wrote an inferior one called TRUCKLINE CAFE. It was denounced by the critics in chorus. Mr. Anderson was so convinced that he was a better judge of his own work than the members of the Critics' Circle that he bought full-page ads in all the New York papers in which he denounced what he called the "Jukes Family". The general public remained quite alone and voted Mr. Anderson something rather less than a good sport. You don't argue with the umpire on Broadway. But when ANNE OF THE THOUSAND DAYS (Mr. Anderson's latest play) was produced it received most generous notices. By tacit agreement the author's tantrum was overlooked, forgotten and forgiven.

Having to sit through seventy or eighty new plays of every kind in the course of a New York season and to find at least two-thirds of them unacceptable would appear to be a rather desperate way to seek entertainment. To undergo their ordeal year in, year out, calls for a great love of the theatre. There is an element of the gamble about it. Ten plays in a row may be poor and unworthy but the next one may prove to be a *South Pacific*, a *Glass Menagerie* or a *Life With Father*. Just any one of these will pay for a score of the dismal ineptitudes and the tawdry smuttness that find their way every year in the production calendar.

The topflight critics do not go to the theatre to find chopping blocks for their axes. They really hope that every time the curtain rises it will be on another *Our Town* or *Life With Father*. They know that the odds are against this happy state of affairs, but they hope against hope. And when they swing the critical axe it is as an act of public duty, to save the theatre public from spending time and money on the shoddy and the insincere and the inexpert, because the speedy liquidation of such unworthy plays clears the ground for the next one in line. Incurable optimists, the critics are always hoping for better things and their frank enjoyment when they find something to their justification is proof that they are neither sadists nor Jukes but only rather gentle souls who must be cruel to be kind.

# A Living Newspaper in the High School

By JACK MORRISON

Theater Arts Department, University of California, Los Angeles, California

THE living newspaper, which created so much notice in the Federal Theater of the "Thirties" with exciting productions such as *One Third of a Nation*, and *Spirochete*, developed techniques which have somehow never been thoroughly exploited by the high school. These techniques, essentially a kind of three-dimensional comic strip style, offer a more ready and stimulating answer to the recurrent demand of the administrator for a "skit" during safety week, a community celebration, or a UNESCO program. Something of the same technique has lately received a more dignified name, socio-drama, but basically the idea of the living newspaper is a simple and primitive one. It is merely a group of people acting out problems of immediate interest and concern for themselves and their community. How to produce a living newspaper in the secondary school drama class is the purpose of this article.

The procedure for arriving at a final production for an audience is not difficult and the steps are quite clear. The first is to determine (1) the area of interest (safety in the chemistry laboratory, safety in driving, a phase of juvenile delinquency, conduct at football games, the cafeteria, a centennial celebration, or whatever). With the area of the production established, you are ready to talk to your dramatics class concerning the next step.

You give the class the general area and (2) ask for ideas. Ask for anything that may pop into their heads about the subject at hand. Then as the ideas come, write them down on the blackboard. Suppose the subject is conduct at football games. Some stimulation may be needed at the outset here but once started the ideas (driving to the game, crowding at the gate, following the yell leader, good or bad relations with the other rooting section) begin to pour out. Now is the time to (3) look for sources of information: newspaper stories, magazine articles about teams that have severed playing relationships because of poor sportsmanship, interviews with the coach, yell leader, and vice-principal. The class is asked to get their sources checked and to bring back as many ideas as possible for the next day.

Next day add the new material to the blackboard and (4) group the ideas into relatively cohesive units such as going to the game, entering the bleachers, player-coach relationship, rooting section-team relationships and so on. Then (5) assign these units to a writing unit of one or more writers to work the material up into a given scene. It is not necessary at this point, and sometimes not necessary at all, to write dialogue. Tell the writers simply to put

down what happens — to sketch a scenario. (Incidentally this procedure quite often discloses people who can write for theater presentations although they have not "written" anything before. This may be because they work at the beginning with ideas and sequences rather than words on paper.) You may spend a number of days on this, helping the writing units, adding writers who have finished to those who have not and so on. When most of the units are complete and you have had a chance to look them over, (6) assemble all the scenes. You will probably want to do this by having them read in class and listing them on the blackboard. The class is almost always a good indication of what scenes will develop well and what ones will not. Nevertheless, there is usually at least one scene which will be better than it first appears — watch out for this.

The next step is (7) to edit the scenes. Drop those which do not seem effective and arrange the balance into a dramatic sequence. You may, for example, in the football conduct development, want to follow a strict chronological sequence. On the other hand, a flash-back technique may give you just the effect you need. It should be added, too, that the scenes may continue with the same characters and locale or they may not. Now (8) cast the show. The actors may double and triple, but cast the complete show and, with the scenarios as a basis, have the actors improvise the scene in full, creating their own dialogue. The

chances are you will get much better dialogue from the actors improvising their own. Have someone standing by with pencil and paper to be ready when good dialogue pops out.

Now you are writing and (9) re-writing with the actors on foot. Keep the process alive and exciting but begin (10) to formalize the script by getting down the exact business and dialogue and (11) adding narration, music, and sound effects to bring the show together. Finally, (12) put the show into rehearsal.

You now have a show on your hands and the chances are very good that it is lively and full of energy because it has come right out of you, the school, or community who is going to see it and your class. There are some things, however, you should keep in mind about staging. Keep it simple, almost barren. Make it move with dispatch. Use your sound system liberally for music and narration to set the mood, the scene, and necessary exposition. Get maximum movement in the scene from the basic writing and through your direction — if the scenes are merely dialogue or monologue, you might as well convert the production into a radio show. Work closely with your technicians so that your dress rehearsal is smooth and set a tempo actors and technicians can recognize and make their own.

One of the flexible factors of the living newspaper is that it can run from about ten minutes to a full length show. Therefore, you can build it to the exact length you need. It should be added that only a smoother dress rehearsal will give you the final answer as to how long the show runs.

The high school teacher-director should have an enjoyable time with the living newspaper, especially if he starts out slowly and gets his hand in by doing a few as strictly classroom projects without an audience. The technique is simple but exacting when a sizeable one is undertaken. And keep the comic strip analogy in mind.



This is the setting for the famous Federal Theatre Project play, *One Third of a Nation*, given in "living newspaper style" in the early thirties. (Photograph courtesy Theatre Collection, New York Public Library.)

# The Revue

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York 18, N. Y.

PERHAPS the most native form of expression in the theatre of the United States is the revue. Until quite recently, too, the revue was the form most often associated with the American theatre by people of other countries. With the post-World War II success of *Oklahoma*, *Carousel*, *Annie Get Your Gun* and other of our "book" shows in the capitals of the world, this view may be in the process of change. As I write one of the biggest hits in Paris is the last-named of these musicals. Annie Oakley, Frank Butler and Buffalo Bill and the wonderful music of Irving Berlin are gathered there under the almost American title, *Annie du Far West*.

The revue is, I feel, the most difficult type of production to produce. Lester Bernstein wrote in the *NEW YORK TIMES* of March 14th, 1948: "By common consent, an attempt to put on a revue is the most pronounced form of the madness that qualifies a man to join the League of New York Theatre (the producers' organization)." While this may be a rather caustic view of the problem; it is so with some reason. Let us look, for a moment, at some of the necessary ingredients of a revue.

In last month's consideration of the "book" show, we saw that the plot is not the most important factor in a good musical. Very often, the plot is only strong enough to support the score and the specialties of the starring players. A revue must have several plots . . . each sketch must be an entity, and its brevity is not a simplification. It is very often much more difficult to make an effect in a short time . . . to convey an idea, a characterization and to hold an audience with a few deft lines. If you are skeptical, make an attempt at a good sketch. Take two characters and confine

yourself to fifty speeches (twenty-five exchanges of dialogue, and see how great an effect you can achieve.

In addition to several good sketches, a crack revue must contain musical numbers, opportunities for dance routines, some specialties (usually determined by the forte of the featured or starred players) and some opportunities for dance. Once good examples of all these are obtained, the assembling of them is a most important matter. The running order can determine the success or failure of even a very fine sketch. It has been pointed out that one does not stop producing a revue until the run is over. There is constant reshuffling of the sequences, new timing is tried, a new punch line may be inserted in a comedy routine, the choreography might be altered to gain a new effect. If you ever have the opportunity, attend performances of a revue at a fortnight or a month interval. Alterations will then be more obvious and you can then judge whether effects have been heightened or decreased.

Let us look back over the great moments from some of the revues of the not too distant past before proceeding to a study of the revue's genealogy. In the current season's *Anta Album*—the annual mammoth benefit for the American National Theatre and Academy—one of the most often re-played revue sketches enjoyed another rendition. This is George S. Kaufman's, *The Still Alarm*, which was created for the first of the wonderful *Little Shows*. First presented more than two decades ago, this sketch has become a favorite of one-act play programs. Every one of you must have

## THEATRE ARTS IN EUROPE TOUR

For six weeks this summer (July 13 through September 9), workers in the theatre and students of it may attend the commercial theatre, the art theatre and summer festivals, and visit theatre collections and theatre schools in six European countries. Plans for this theatre arts tour have been made by Professor John D. Mitchell of Manhattan College, New York City, who will share his knowledge of European theatres in lectures and discussions along the way. Full information may be obtained by writing to World Studytours, Columbia University Travel Service, Agents, 2960 Broadway, New York 27, N. Y.

witnessed or taken part in a performance of the play at some time. I will not, therefore, further elaborate upon the plot or the satire of the work. It is an instance of the enduring quality of good revue material.

The *Little Shows* set New York agog in 1929 and the early thirties. They were rather sophisticated affairs and indulged somewhat in the prevalent cynicism of the period. Nothing just like them has been done since—they drew heavily upon the thought and customs of the days out of which they arose. Libby Holman is the star who comes immediately to mind when recalling the shows, and the tune is "Body and Soul." Clifton Webb, Fred Allen and Lester Allen are other players who did much to make these revues favorites.

A few years after—at the same Music Box Theatre—*As Thousands Cheer* boasted the presence of Marilyn Miller, Clifton Webb, Helen Broderick and Ethel Waters. It was here that Miss Broderick did the magnificent impersonation of Queen Mary of Great Britain supported by Leslie Adams as King George and Clifton Webb as the Prince of Wales. Herein, too, Mr. Webb and Marilyn Miller (who was succeeded in the cast by Dorothy Stone) did Irving Berlin's enduring favorite, "Easter Parade."

One recalls with fondness the long series of revues in which Beatrice Lillie delighted the audiences of this country and abroad. I was too young to attend the early Noel Coward revues in which Miss Lillie first won favor in the United States. I did see, however, the Hassard Short productions which filled the large winter Garden in the middle thirties . . . AT HOME ABROAD and THE SHOW IS ON. Later, for Billy Rose, Miss Lillie did SEVEN LIVELY ARTS, which many of you must have seen. Miss Lillie as a great dramatic actress at "The Reading of the Play"; or again as a dizzy matron endeavoring to purchase "One dozen double damask dinner napkins"; or as a first-nighter at the Glegud HAMLET; or the lady who watches over the box-office of the Theatre Guild. All of these are revue greats!

An instance of how the revue contributes to the other theatre forms comes to mind in a consideration of the *Ziegfeld Follies of 1936*. One of the stars of this post-Ziegfeld, Shubert fabricated *Follies* was Fanny Brice. Miss Brice was not a new name in the musical theatre. She had long before this won favor on



The Hartmans in a scene from the new revue, *Tickets, Please*, which opened on Broadway late in April. (Photograph by Fred Fehl)

the stage and in films. Her portrayal of Mrs. Cohen was well-known to the frequenters of the theatre and the vaudeville houses of the country. "Mrs. Cohen at the Beach" was one of her reliable laugh-getters. In this edition of the *Follies*, however, Miss Brice created a new character—Baby Snooks. The fiend immediately won favor. Snooks has become one of the top radio comedians and a familiar of musical films. We do hope that Miss Brice will some day get a chance to revive Mrs. Cohen and some of her earlier revue creations.

When Florenz Ziegfeld created the first ZIEGFELD FOLLIES in 1907, it is unlikely that he knew a new American theatre institution was being founded. We are inclined, in retrospect, to think of these shows as little more than "girly" numbers. One of the great impresarios trademarks was "the most beautiful girls in the world" He endeavored, moreover, to expose as much of these girls as the law and public approval would permit. In addition to these production numbers, the FOLLIES included on their rosters the outstanding comics of the theatre and top talent was engaged to write the words and the music. Will Rogers, Leon Errol, W. C. Fields, Fanny Brice, Eddie Cantor were among the players.

It is this type of entertainment which marks one of the two distinct types of revue in the American theatre. In the wake of Ziegfeld's great success followed similar "girly" revues. Earl Carroll produced an almost annual *Vanities*; George White assembled his *Scandals*. It would be virtually impossible to name any of today's stage and film comedians (to say nothing of radio and television) who does not owe something to one of these productions. Television fans think that they have discovered Milton Berle, but those of us who have watched America's revues know that he was not born out of a video tube.

This type of revue prevailed throughout the second decade of the twentieth century. Lew Leslie produced similar shows with all-Negro casts—the *Blackbirds*. From these came Ethel Waters, Bill Robinson, Rochester, Buck and Bubbles, Nina Mae McKinney, Cab Calloway. They were jazzy, flamboyant offerings . . . colorful settings and costumes and the almost strident music of the era. One after another of these "series" revues came into being.

At the same time, the intimate revue was flourishing and proving the training field of new talent. Young groups could produce the intimate revue and modest budgets. It was necessary to include large production numbers. A minimum of scenery was used . . . just enough to suggest the locale. The featured members of the cast doubled as the singing or the dancing chorus. An opportunity was provided to prove one's versatility. It is the intimate revue that we associated with the experimental groups and the fledgling organizations.

We have seen in earlier articles in the season's survey how some of these productions were done. We shall merely cite here, two of the fledgling groups who produced success-

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ful revues. The Neighborhood Playhouse (which today, unfortunately exists only as a theatre school) came forth with several editions of THE GRAND STREET FOLLIES; the Theatre Guild's revue was the GARRICK GAIETIES. One of the features of each of these was the satire on the current theatre successes. Albert Carroll and Dorothy Sands lampooned almost all of the stars of the twenties at one time or another. Theatre enthusiasts still talk about Mr. Carroll's imitation of the Chinese player, Mei Lan-Fang. The theatre season was not complete until one or both of these revues had set up shop.

In more recent years, the Theatre Guild has tried its hand at a revue again. In 1935, *Parade* was attempted as a revival of the *Garrick Gaieties*. Jimmy Savo, Eve Arden, Avis Andrews and Leon Errol helped make it the joy it proved to be, but it did not re-establish the revue form as a favorite with the Theatre Guild audience (a rather special theatre public).

The intimate revue continues, however, to be the favorite testing ground of new talent. In 1933, Leonard Sillman produced the first of his *New Faces*. Among the actors in the production were Henry Fonda, Burgess Meredith and Nancy Hamilton. A young group of screen aspirants produced *Meet The People* and Jack Gilford and Doodles Weaver became established comedians. This season's *Small Wonder* and *Touch And Go* have proved the abilities of Tom Ewell, Nancy Andrews and George Hall.

One of the current theatre's outstanding hits is *Gentleman Prefer Blondes*—a book show adapted from Anita Loos' popular novel. The star is Carol Channing, who first won stardom in last season's revue from the Pacific Coast, *Lend An Ear*.

The revue is directly traceable to vaudeville. In the place of a series of acts with different performers for each, one finds a series of numbers with the same cast of players. Its difficulties are many but, when well mounted and performed, is a most agreeable form of entertainment.

We are known to theatregoers in other sections of the world for our musicals. Certain of our dramatists are known to non-American audiences, but they are few. It is only since World War II that great numbers of our plays have enjoyed foreign productions such as Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* has been accorded. Our musical productions, on the other hand, have met with favor all over the world. They are one of our chief means of speaking with our fellow world-citizens. I do not wish to seem to be overstressing my thesis. This is the place, nonetheless, to plead for more serious attention to our musicals. They are (as Hamlet said of the players): "the abstracts and brief chronicles of the times." They are, too, new talent's proving ground and—most importantly—magnificent entertainment!

# LIFE Comes to Troupe 729

By THOMAS A. MORSE

Troupe Sponsor, Winchester High School, Winchester, Mass.

THE title is descriptive because on March 10th when the LIFE issue appeared on our news stand, Winchester High School experienced the thrill of a lifetime, a national feature photographic essay on our senior-junior play, *Mother Is a Freshman*.

The story behind the story is an interesting one involving the elements of good fortune, hard work and rewarding results. Lets begin at the beginning on an afternoon in November.

It had been in the back of my mind that many of our national magazines devoted comparatively little space to the activities of youth. Its true they played up the sensational aspects but the real, wholesome, hard working tasks had been lost in the shuffle. The idea of submitting a suggestion to LIFE began to jell. I talked it over with my wife (a very valuable asset to my work) and she radiated that extra spark of enthusiasm that resulted in a letter addressed to the Special Features division of LIFE in New York. It seemed like a long shot at the time but I was trusting to the old adage, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

About a month passed and no word from New York. It looked like it has been buried in the editorial office. Then one December day I received word that New York was trying to reach me on the telephone. I called back to find one of LIFE's research writers, Mary Leatherbee, had my letter and was interested.

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### ADDRESS

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SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA

Apparently, New York had previously thought about a story on a high school play but the idea had more or less been forgotten. My letter (Dame Fortune again) came at a most opportune time and LIFE was interested! Continuing my conversation I was soon to be rudely shocked when I learned four or five schools were to be considered but Winchester was considered a little too urban for their concept of the story set-up. Here I think I talked and thought as fast as I ever had before. I sincerely felt we had the makings of a good story and supported my arguments by every fact I could think of at the moment. Finally, she graciously said a Boston Bureau representative would come out to look us over but no promises could be made. That we must stand on our own merits was a parting shot in our conversation.

A few days later Don Morris, writer for the Boston Bureau, appeared and proceeded to look us over and most thoroughly! Then came the days of suspense through the Christmas vacation. Then, the day I shall long remember right after our vacation ended, Don called to say, "New York is satisfied. The story is okay and Winchester is it!"

The endless detail then began. First, full approval and cooperation was given by our administrators, Mr. Wade Grindle, principal and Dr. Forbes Norris, superintendent. Second, informing the cast and what a banner day that was, such a reaction from fifteen people I didn't believe was possible. Third, we met the man that was to become practically one of us before the show was over, Yale Joel, LIFE Staff Photographer assigned to the Boston Bureau. Yale and I talked the whole problem over and this was the first inkling I had that LIFE intended to make a major feature out of our production. I could hardly believe it and to be

truthful never really let myself believe it until I saw the issue two days before they reached the news stands. However, we rolled up our sleeves and went to work. We laid out a production schedule in what I hope was the best professional manner, biographical sketches were written for each member of the cast, lighting arrangements were decided, the auditorium was minutely examined, the school was "cased" as they put it, the town was toured for places of interest, the varied problems of "shooting" were discussed and finally we were ready to go to work.

Our rehearsals were scheduled for everyday during the week except one. These lasted from about 2:45 P. M. until 5:30 or 6:00 P. M. depending on the material to be covered. Yale was present at practically every one of these sessions and constantly at work. It might be interesting to note that he took all of his shots candid and not by photoflash. The first day of picture taking I assigned our stage electrician Bob Loftus of our Troupe 729 to assist Yale during the entire project and that day they plotted lighting patterns that made the auditorium really brill out with photo flood and photospot lights. Thus we began.

First, he concentrated on getting to know the cast, gaining the confidence and examining the various facets of their individual personalities. This task he considered most important and did a most workman-like job. Then came countless shots of rehearsals from every conceivable angle, from closeups to ladder shots. Yale was one of those fortunate persons that can be everywhere and not ever in the way which from my angle of direction was perfect.

After each days work we would adjourn for coffee in a local restaurant and discuss what had been done and what tomorrow's plans were to be.

As we progressed the shooting schedule became tighter and tighter and planning began to be a vital part of my work. He then revealed his plan to "shoot" the cast in their everyday



Members of Thespian Troupe 729 of the Winchester, Mass., High School, with Thomas A. Morse as director. Most of the students shown in this picture participated in the production of *Mother Is a Freshman* carried as a pictorial story by LIFE magazine.

#### ARTICLES ON TELEVISION APPRECIATION

Readers of DRAMATICS magazine may look forward to the publication of a series of seven articles on television appreciation during the 1950-51 school year, prepared by Si Mills, editor of our radio department. This series will be offered in response to many requests we have received for the latest information on television. Mr. Mills is in close contact with the latest developments in television among the leading studios in New York City. Assisting Mr. Mills in gathering the latest information will be Howard Phillip of the television studios of the National Broadcasting Company, Radio City.

Among the subjects which Mr. Mills will discuss are: Producing for Television, Sets for Television Shows, Types of Television Performances, Studio Production Problems, Writing for Television, and Standards for the Enjoyment of Television Shows. The first of this series of articles will appear in our October issue.

-EDITOR

life. This took him to their homes, classrooms, dances, detention halls, special help periods, work, soda fountains, bowling alleys, theatres, parties, churches and anywhere else that an interesting picture might be made. Unfortunately, New York decided not to use this approach and as a result several hundred good pictures of dramatics were wasted. I think it might interest the readers to know that a grand total of 2119 pictures were actually taken and as Yale put it "You take 100 to get one LIFE considers worth using."

So it went for the many weeks of preparation, each day bringing a rich and new experience. The tempo increased and the nervous tension began to grip cast, school, town and director.

Space does not permit the telling of the side incidents of which there were many. However, I would like to say in fairness to the cast most of the mistakes mentioned in *Life* occurred during dress rehearsal. The two nights of production went as well as I have ever had the good fortune to see a high school play go. It was an extremely good job on the part of all concerned.

The week following the play I was busy with the photographer and writer getting last minute details cleaned up. Then came the week of February 27th - I can safely say one of the most hectic I have ever experienced. This was when New York called to say the story was being considered for publication. I worked night and day for *Life* during that week, calls from New York, calls from Boston, details, names, dates, places, incidents, remarks, descriptions and so forth. But finally it was done the word was received - "Winchester story closed for publication in the March 13th issue."

What an electrifying piece of news that was!

Thus our story closes, but before ending it, I should like to thank Yale Joel,



Alumni and active members of Thespian Troupe 721 who participated in stock company last summer at the Spring Valley, New York, High School, with Francis Scott as director. (Photograph by Martin Aronow.)

## Thespian Summer Stock Company

By W. FRANCIS SCOTT

Sponsor, Thespian Troupe 721, Spring Valley High School, Spring Valley, N. Y.

A stock company which received the full support of the townspeople and visitors last summer was a spontaneous project of members of our Thespian troupe and alumni who had returned from college. Eager to continue their work in dramatics, forty-seven members and former members of the troupe decided to present a series of plays for the benefit of the local Youth Center and the Knights of Pythias Scholarship.

An organization meeting served to select three plays. It was decided to present one play with an entirely male cast, one whose cast would be all-female and one play with a mixed cast. The plays selected were, *Skipper Next to God*, *The Young and Fair* and *Junior Miss*.

The use of the high school auditorium was donated by the Board of Education and rehearsals were scheduled for the evening as most of the cast were employed during the day. This employment forced eight members of the group to drop out and the season finished with thirty-seven in the group. All plays were rehearsed each evening under the direction of the writer and assistant directors, Leah Currant and Joan Marino.

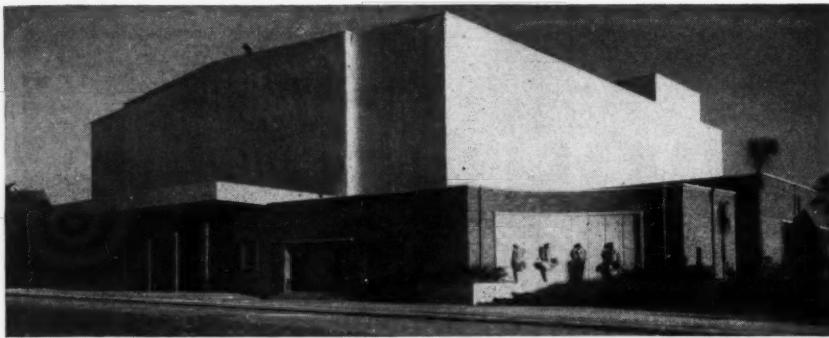
In spite of strong professional competition (three summer stock companies in a radius of six miles) the season was highly successful and two hundred dollars was donated to the projects which had been selected. All newspaper as well as the audiences were highly complimentary concerning the quality of the performances. The performance of *The Young and Fair* was especially commended as it was the amateur premiere for this play.

Colleges and universities represented in the casts were; Syracuse University, Albany State Teachers' College, Michigan, Colgate, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, Cornell, Russell Sage and Elmira College.

The season closed with a picnic for all members of the group and a permanent organization was discussed through which the members might be paid a regular salary to compensate for loss of employment and allow for daytime rehearsals. Arrangements were also made to join the New York State League of Community Theatres under the title of "The Valley Players."

our photographer who did so much to bring the story to actual publication, Don Morris, the Boston Bureau's cooperative writer, Tom Prideau *LIFE's* Entertainment Editor, a former high

school teacher and dramatic coach himself and Tim Foote, research writer in *LIFE's* New York office. It was both a pleasure and an education to have worked with these men.



Peabody Auditorium, Daytona Beach, Florida, where some 300 Thespian students and teachers representing the Florida Troupes will hold their evening session on May 5. The Mayor of Daytona Beach will welcome the gathering.

## Florida State Thespian Convention

By BARBARA DODSON

*Troupe Sponsor, Mainland High School, Daytona Beach, Fla.*

**D**AYTONA Beach, Florida, the city of Conventions and the "World's Most Famous Beach, will be the scene of Florida's State Thespian Convention on May 4, 5, and 6, 1950. Thespian Troupe 35 of the Mainland High School will be the host Troupe.

Officers for this year are Madeline Eisenbrey, Troupe 35, Daytona Beach, president; Norman Straub, Troupe 565,

Kissimmee, vice-president; Mary Helen Raines, Troupe 35, Daytona Beach, secretary; and Robert Green, Troupe 8, Miami, treasurer. Troupes from all sections of the state will attend.

Headquarters for the Convention will be the Princess Issena Hotel on Seabreeze Boulevard, only one block off the beach. This is one of Daytona's famous resort hotels. Registration will

be held at the hotel from 9-12 a.m. on May 4 at which time delegates and sponsors will be welcomed to the city.

Following registration and luncheon, Troupe 35 will present a fashion show in skit form displaying beach fashions. During this show several very old bathing suits from Jantzen will be modeled. Dramatics and music will combine to present an enjoyable display of fashions suitable for the beach.

On the evening of May 4, delegates and sponsors will be entertained at a beach picnic featuring famous foods of Daytona.

Later in the evening the Annual State Thespian Amateur Contest will be held at the Mainland High School Auditorium. Each Troupe is allowed to enter one contestant, and the winner will be presented with a cup. The selection may be dramatic, vocal or instrumental music, or dance. This idea was instituted last year by Thespian Regional Director, Mildred Murphy, from the Orlando Senior High School.

Opening event on May 5 will be a Sponsor's breakfast at 8:30 a.m. so that sponsors may become better acquainted with each other and with the work being done in different Troupes.

The regular business meeting of the Convention will be held at 10:00 a.m. on May 5 at the Princess Issena Hotel. Madeline Eisenbrey will preside. At this time each Troupe will give a report on its activities the past year, new officers are elected, a site for the next convention is selected.

During the afternoon of May 5 all delegates and sponsors will have a beach party. At this time they will be free to swim, sun, or sight-see. The Broadwalk will prove a source of amusement.

This evening the program will be held in the lovely new Peabody Auditorium which was completed and dedicated in the fall of 1949. At this affair the mayor of Daytona will welcome the delegates and will crown the girl and boy selected as the Most Photogenic Thespian of 1950. Each Troupe may enter this contest and pictures will be judged by professional photographers. All those who enter the contest will be introduced. Winners receive trophies.

The remainder of the program at Peabody will be a three-act play presented by Stover Little Theater of Stetson University, Deland, Florida.

After the play a dance will be held in the ballroom of the Princess Issena.

On Saturday morning, May 6, members of Troupe 35 will take delegates and sponsors on a Motorcade Tour of Daytona Beach and surrounding points of interest. This event will bring the Convention to a close.

Approximately 300 delegates are expected to attend the Convention. Troupe 35 is busily forming plans to make this Convention one of the best and most memorable in the history of Florida's State Thespian Conventions.

**TWELVE THOUSAND COPIES PRINTED**

## HISTORIC COSTUME FOR THE STAGE

By LUCY BARTON

Illustrated by David Sarvis

This book is designed primarily to be of assistance to those who costume plays. It should prove of equal value to students of fashion design, stylists, and modistes generally, even to saleswomen in dress-shops who wish to deal intelligently with their clients.

In the educational world it will prove valuable to all students of "speech arts" which includes the history of the theatre, directing, and the mounting of a play as well as acting, and especially, of course, to those concentrating on stage design. In art schools, it should be used as a text-book by students of fashion drawing and illustration generally and as collateral reading by students of architecture, interior decoration and applied design. In high school, junior college and senior college, it will be found valuable as collateral reading for the preparation of special topics in European and United States history and in Literature courses.

In nineteen of the twenty chapters the heritage of European and European-American dress is traced from Egypt, through the lands mentioned in the Bible, to Greece, Rome, Byzantium, then to Europe proper and finally to its offshoots in the New World. The twentieth chapter is devoted to the problem of the workshop.

Each of the nineteen historical chapters is illustrated by from twenty to twenty-five pen and ink drawings, the majority of them full-length figures, some details of decorative motifs, jewelry or unusual accessories.

Each chapter covers approximately the same number of topics and each is grouped in so far as possible in the same order. Except for a few cross-references, usually to illustrations, each chapter is a separate unit, so that the designer may, if he wishes, concentrate on one chapter in costuming a given play.

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# CONCENTRATED PROGRAM IN HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE MANAGEMENT AND PRODUCTION

The SCHOOL OF SPEECH of Kent State University and THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY will offer on a cooperative basis a special program of courses, June 19 through July 28, geared to the needs of secondary school teachers and directors of dramatics. Core subject in this unique undertaking will be a special course on

## "Organization and Management of the High School Dramatic Arts Program"

with Blandford Jennings, veteran teacher and director of dramatics at the Clayton, Mo., High School as guest instructor. This course will carry three quarter hours credit, meeting Monday through Friday, one hour each day, for six weeks. The course will be largely a problem solving venture in an attempt to answer the many individual problems facing the average high school dramatics teacher and play director.

Other courses especially chosen for this undertaking are:

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Basic study of the stage, its equipment and use together with the rudiments of play production. e.g. Play selection, casting, rehearsal, etc.

PROFESSOR E. TURNER STUMP, HEAD, SCHOOL OF SPEECH

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY • KENT, OHIO

## ANTA Album of Stars

By GEORGE FREEDLEY

Curator, Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York City

THE American National Theatre and Academy selected the first pages for the ANTA ALBUM at the Ziegfeld Theatre in 1948. Since that time, the successive years' additions have been the focal point of each theatrical season. But with the performances of such rare artists as Helen Hayes, who re-created her magnificent "Victoria Regina" for the first ALBUM, a dream began: to carry to the vast audience of theatre-hungry Americans the magic of ALBUM performances through the medium of recordings. On the ALBUM's third anniversary, Volume I of the recorded ANTA ALBUM OF STARS was released.

Here at last, after two years, five selections were compiled from among the theatre's outstanding productions. Miss Hayes, whose radiant performance helped inspire the ALBUM, is present with two memorable scenes from "Victoria Regina". Also represented are Frederic March and Florence Eldridge, re-creating scenes from *YEARS AGO* and *THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH*. HEDDA GABLER lives again—and, now, for all time—revived by Eva LeGallienne. John Gielgud presents the tragedy of the vacillating King Richard II.

The artists and authors are donating their complete royalties for these records, available at your local record

store, to ANTA to help in its work. Recorded by Decca Record Company at both long playing and regular speeds, the records may be ordered from ANTA, 139 W. 44th St., New York 18, N. Y., the long-playing recording is priced at \$5.85 and the regular 78 rpm with 4-12 inch records at \$9.23, including excise tax and postpaid. ANTA receives additional income through orders placed directly with our office.

With the introduction of new modes in illustrative teaching, the ALBUM OF STARS is destined to reach into the field of education

### ATTENTION: SUBSCRIBERS

DRAMATICS magazine is not published for the months of June, July, August and September. Our publication schedule will be resumed with the October issue which will be mailed the latter part of September.

Change of address should be reported by not later than September 1. Report your old and new address.

and directly into classrooms. Here, acknowledged masters of speech, diction, and character delineation will speak directly to students of English, speech, and drama. Here, historical episodes will be played out to stimulate young minds to an awareness of the real and vital nature of history. And equally important, living moments from the ALBUM will awaken Young America to the magic of the theatre.

The first scenes of the ALBUM are Miss Hayes', in which she lovingly and respectfully reveals the very core of the 19th Century, the reign of Queen Victoria. She is followed by Mr. Gielgud who plays two roles in creating the turbulent atmosphere of the last years of 14th Century English history. In the first scene, he portrays John of Gaunt, and in the second selection, the tragic Richard II. Mr. March and Miss Eldridge then take the stage, first in the scene from *Years Ago*, the autobiographical comedy by Ruth Gordon, and then in the hilarious Atlantic City Convention scene from Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Miss LeGallienne climaxes the ALBUM, presenting Hedda Gabler in classic scene with Judge Brack in which the full tragedy of the woman's frustration is revealed.

A booklet with each ALBUM describes the various scenes and contains biographical notes about the actors who present them. It also introduces something of the background of ANTA, its achievements and its purposes.

## THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Northeastern State College,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

### Staging SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

By W. J. FRIEDERICH

Head, Department of Drama, Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio

**SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL**, by Richard B. Sheridan. A comedy of manners in 14 scenes, with 9 men and 9 women, 5 interior settings (our version). Costumes: 1780. No royalty.

#### Suitability

*School for Scandal* is an excellent choice for college, community, and high school groups because comedy of the better type is always welcomed by both actors and audience. The chief disadvantage, from the director's point of view, is that, like all comedies of manners, *School for Scandal* depends a great deal upon acting technique. Lack of this technique, however, may often be compensated for by extra rehearsals and individual drill sessions.

To many groups the numerous characters may be a drawback; but, on the other hand, some groups like plays that require many actors so that more members may be given an opportunity to act and, also, so that the rehearsal and memorization loads may be more evenly apportioned. The several sets, too, need not be as menacing as they sound, for the artificial, theatrical style of this comedy obviously does not demand — perhaps does not even want — realistic settings.

Clever script adaptation by the director, Professor Ruth A. Wilcox, eliminated several of our problems. Our policy of spreading theatrical opportunity to as many people as possible demanded that we give more roles to women than the script indicated. The original script calls for from twelve to fifteen men and five women. Several of the men servants were immediately turned into maids;

only one servant — Trip, valet to the bachelor Charles — remained a male role. Some versions of the play open with a Miss Verjuice acting as scoundalmonger for Lady Speerwell, whereas others call for a man, Snake. We chose to use the lady, and then, further, gave her the few lines that Snake has in the last scene. The role of Sir Benjamin Backbite's uncle, Crabtree, has nothing in it which necessitates its being a male role; thus Crabtree became Lady Crabtree, aunt to Sir Benjamin. Lastly, by indicating that the party at Charles' house was progressing in the card room and by bringing only Careless into the picture room, we eliminated several more men. Final count: nine men and nine women.

There was only one aspect of the play, which, in our opinion, needed censorship. The insinuations concerning Moses, the Jewish money-lender, hardly met with our approval. Because the French were not exactly loved by the English during this period, Moses was easily made into a French money-lender.

#### Plot

Briefly, the complex plot for *School for Scandal* concerns the rivalry of the two brothers, Joseph and Charles Surface, to become the heir of their rich Uncle Oliver. Joseph is a hypocrite who professes goodness and virtue through sentimental platitudes, whereas Charles, ostensibly the scoundrel, is actually the sensitive, kindly young man who camouflages his nature with dubious philandering. Uncle Oliver, returning to England after many years, is unknown to either of them. By disguising himself as a usurer and a borrower, he



Scene from the production of **School for Scandal** as given under the direction of Prof. Friederich.

meets them and judges their true characters quite accurately.

The second plot concerns the marital difficulties of the old Sir Peter Teazle and his young, giddy, extravagant, country wife. Her experiencing the scandal of being caught in Joseph's rooms finally teaches Lady Teazle her lesson.

#### Casting

Actually there are no "leads" in this play in the sense that one finds them in most plays. There are many important characters: the young romancers, Charles and Sir Peter's ward, Maria; the Teazles; Joseph, the villain; Uncle Oliver and his former steward, Rowley; Lady Sneerwell, who plots against Charles to get him herself. The casting, therefore, should consider the great need for ensemble work; since almost all roles have at least one big scene, the acting capacities should be as evenly matched as possible. Even so-called minor characters are more than usually important. Miss Verjuice, for example has the opening scene which discloses the antecedent action, and she also provides the key to the denouement in the final scene — her only two appearances.

The characterizations are rather generally divided between two types of people: those of the sophisticated social set (Ladies Teazle, Sneerwell, and Crabtree, Mrs. Candour, the Surfaces, and Sir Benjamin), and those who prefer and practice the unaffected, simple life (Sir Peter, Uncle Oliver, Rowley, Maria). Differences in voice and personal tonality are, therefore, rather well established: sharp, brittle, cold voices for the malicious set, and warm, sympathetic, natural voices for the opposite group. The former must also be physically equipped to portray the posing, the ennui, the affectations of the social "dandy". No other special physical characteristics are demanded for any of the parts, except perhaps a certain dashing handsomeness for the fops. Careless must be able to sing well enough to rip off a drinking song.

#### Directing

Twenty-nine rehearsals were scheduled: the first seventeen covered blocking, acting, getting lines down, and developing business and characterization; the next six were intensive drill sessions for individuals or small groups to polish detailed business and characterization. The last four rehearsals paid special attention to properties, costumes, lights, and shifting (one problem added each night), and were followed by two dress rehearsals.

The chief direction problem was the timing and tempo, for there is not one slow scene in the play. As in a comedy, care also was taken to insure riding of laughs. One of the most difficult problems arose from the fact that the production utilized very few properties and pieces of furniture. Variety in composition thus had to come largely from movement about the stage. Business, too, had to depend largely upon costume and character pantomime rather than upon physical properties and setting. Costume accessories of the era — snuff boxes, fan, handkerchiefs, reticules, walking sticks, eye-glasses, etc. — were invaluable.

#### Technical Problems

The play calls for seven locales, but a few changes of lines, already indi-

cated, reduced the four rooms in Charles' house to two: the parlor and the picture gallery. We are blessed with a small stage (proscenium: 22 feet wide and 12 feet high, depth: 18 feet) that has little storage space and no flying facilities. Consequently, to facilitate shifting — and, likewise, to enhance the theatrical artificiality of the script — we decided to use the book set.

#### Floor Plan

The "back" of the book, from which the "leaves" swung, was made of 2 x 12 planks, 14 feet long, set upright in rear center with 2 x 4 braces to the sides and rear. Holes were drilled at the top and bottom of the planks, and L-hooks run through and fastened with a wing nut on the rear side. These L-hooks were made by a machine shop out of half-inch steel rods, turned up, at right angles, about an inch on one end and threaded on the other end for the nut.

Flat steel strips (1 inch wide,  $\frac{1}{4}$  thick, 4 feet long) were screwed into the top and bottom rails of the leaves. The ends projected beyond the leaves about two inches and had holes drilled into them. These holes fitted the L-hooks on the book-back, and the hung leaves swung freely in either direction so that both sides of the six leaves were used.

The leaves (8 feet wide and 2 feet high) were made of combinations of ordinary flats. Rather than covering the back sides with canvas, we chose to emphasize their wood frames in imitation of the intricate wall paneling of the times. The cover of the book was painted Morocco with the title, "THE PRINCIPLES OF SCANDAL", in gold.

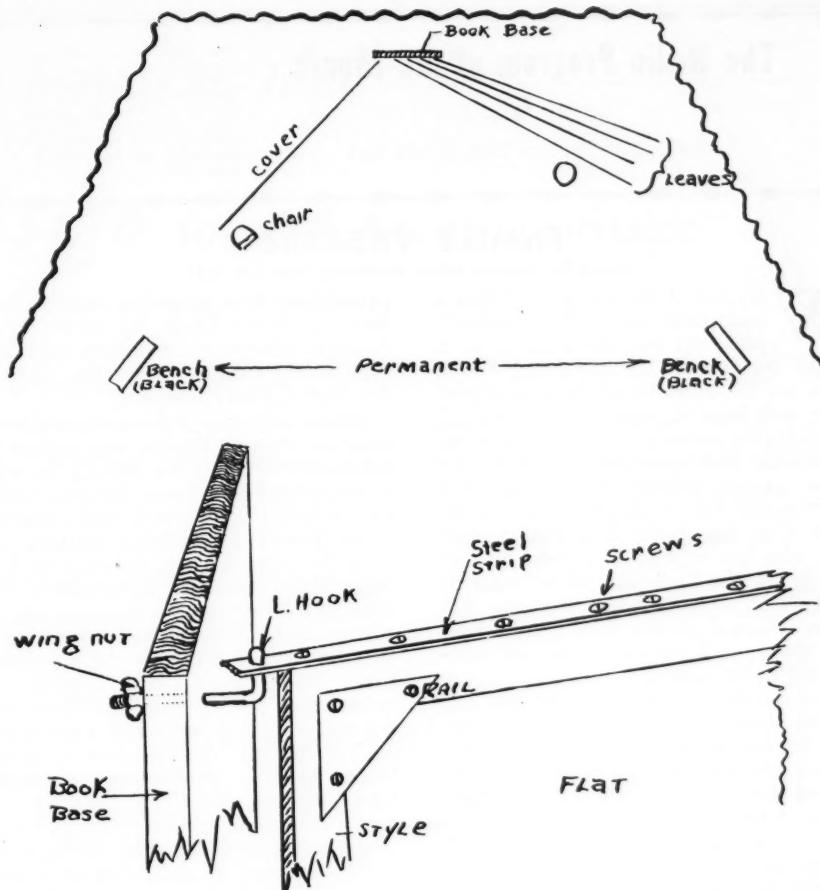
The fourteen scenes were run with one intermission at the end of the tenth scene. All swinging of the leaves and moving on and off of the few furniture pieces were done in sight of the audience by the servants in the play. A page, who also rendered the prologue, bridged the gaps with satiric pantomime and dances.

#### Lighting

Lighting was quite simple. At the beginning one spot lighted the Page during the prologue, and then it shifted to the cover of the closed book. The leaves of the book were then opened and remained so until the curtain call, which showed the book being closed upon the cast. Since the leaves of the book defined a permanent acting area, no change of light areas was necessary. Abandonment of realism also eliminated the realistic problems such as sources of light and time of day. Fifteen 400-w spots, colored daylight pink, special lavender, and light straw, were focused from the first stage batten; and six 1000-w spots in the auditorium covered the apron. The only changes in lighting came between scenes, during the shifts, when lights were lowered slightly until the next scene was set.

#### Costumes

Costumes, except for the four more elaborate ones for the fops, were made by the costume class, who adapted their resigns from the costume books by Lucy Barton and Fairfax Walkup. Materials used were largely drapery materials bought at sales at upholstery shops and



ISOMETRIC DETAIL OF HOW LEAF IS HUNG

furniture and curtain stores: spun rayon, quilted chintz, cotton with rayon designs, taffeta, antique satin, glass curtain netting, etc. Hoops and panniers were made from ordinary galvanized wire, bent into shape and suspended from waist bands by strips of rug binding.

In the five men's costumes, heavy cottons and rayons were used for knee-pants; satin and velvet for covering old vests, elongating them like the vests of the period; ladies three-quarter length suit-coats, circa 1910-20, for the jackets; lace and net for frills at the neck and sleeves; and dyed ladies cotton hose for stockings.

#### Make-up

Make-up emphasized the artificiality of the era, suggesting the pallid complexions produced by face enamels, make-up, and loose living (Stein's bases, No. 2, 3, and 4), cupid-bow lips, beauty spots, plentiful rouge and eye shadow of purple, green, and blue, and pencil-thin eyebrows.

#### Budget

Script typing .....	9.00
Hardware for swinging leaves .....	9.20
Two planks for book-back .....	8.40
Scene paint (estimated) .....	10.00
Four costumes, 15 wigs (rented) .....	83.00
Costume materials (15 costumes) .....	54.00
Properties .....	1.70
Publicity, tickets, programs .....	48.00
Total .....	\$223.30

#### Music

Music was used between scenes both

to provide interest for the audience and accompaniment for the Page's dance-mime work. Selections used were: Delibes' "Pizzicato Polka" from *Sylvia Ballet*, Mozart's *Ten Variations in G Major* and *Idomeneo Ballet Music*, Hayden's *Quartet in G Major*, and Paderewski's *Minuet in G*.

#### Results

If any conclusion is valid, I think it is the fact that an elaborate production like *School for Scandal* is entirely possible for many groups, despite their limitations of small stages, no shifting facilities, tight budgets (lack of royalty compensates for costume expense), and simple lighting set-ups. The production has the added advantage of helping people like the "classics." The real value of any educational theater depends upon the scope of theatrical experience it brings to both its workers and its audience; certainly a familiarity with the classic plays, other than reading them from the printed page in a literature course, is part of what we owe our people. This type of play represents a compromise between entertainment and educational growth, for it is a good transitional step away from cheaper comedies to a tougher program of plays that have more "meat" to them — plus the value of "survival of the fittest."

## The Radio Program of the Month

By SI MILLS

446 East 20th St., New York, 9, New York

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1949-50 school year. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

## "FAMILY THEATRE"

(Mutual Broadcasting System, Wednesday, 9:30 P. M. EST)

WOULD it be fair to call this a sustaining show? Well, nobody picks up the check for it, so it might be considered sustaining. But, then, on the other hand, there is a purpose and kind of "sponsor". Actually, I suppose, the series is someplace between sustaining and sponsored. There are many people behind it, but the idea is primarily the result of one man's efforts. That man is the Rev. Patrick Peyton, who has expended a great deal of energy on the idea, but whose name is never used on any of the programs. He is an ethereal person who manipulates the strings and yet who does not exist for the radio audience.

But the Reverend does exist and has worked hard to make his idea a fact on one of the nation's leading networks, with a vast audience each week. Father Patrick Peyton, 38, comes from County Mayo in Ireland and a town that boasts about having produced over 4,000 priests and nuns; so it was no surprise for this man to want to become a priest. It should have been a surprise, however, in this case that he realized his goal. At the age of 19, Father Peyton decided to come to America. His father was ill and there was little at home to keep him. He decided to migrate to Scranton, Pa., to which two of his sisters had already gone.

In Scranton, he got a job as janitor in the cathedral; and it was there that he made his final decision to enter the

priesthood. After attending Moreau Seminary at Notre Dame he went to the Foreign Missionary Seminary in Washington and studied under the aegis of the Holy Cross Fathers.

When only two years away from ordination, Patrick Peyton was stricken by tuberculosis; and even though he tried to keep the illness secret, he was rushed to a hospital before long and remained there over 13 weeks. When nothing else could be done for him, he went back to Notre Dame and was put to bed. It was then that he prayed for his recovery.

According to the way Father Peyton tells the rest of the story, he felt much better within two weeks. There was new hope, new lightness. When two doctors examined him, they were amazed and excited, allowing him to return before long to Washington to resume his studies.

It is that remarkable recovery to which "Family Theatre" owes its birth. Upon being ordained in 1942, Patrick Peyton made the resolution that has been his guide since that time—a resolution to bend his every effort toward showing his thankfulness for recovery, a resolution to bring back to the family the practice of saying prayers in a group.

When the war broke out, duties took the priest through much of the country; and it was then that he conceived the idea of nationwide broadcasts to unite each family in prayer for the end of the war. On Mother's Day in 1945, Father Peyton was to go on the air in

observance of that holiday. That air time was made possible by two people who are not Catholics—they were a Protestant and a Jew. That particular Mother's Day was something special because several days earlier Germany had surrendered. It had become a day of thanksgiving for victory. Bing Crosby's services were secured, and he recited the Rosary. That program, highly successful, led Father Peyton to the belief that such prayer should be regular and not a special event. He realized that the best way to reach the American public was with the aid of movie, theatre, and radio stars. He went to the office of a woman executive of Mutual Broadcasting System with his idea and was almost immediately turned down. Then he tried Ed Koback, President of Mutual, and was told to first get promises from the various stars to appear.

The Reverend then went to Los Angeles where he had no friends or definite plans. Of course, he had certain ideas as to how to achieve his end, but they were very vague. He did not even know how to begin to get Hollywood stars to promise to help him. Bewildered and frightened, he thought of the Bishop in Los Angeles, even though that Bishop might think him a crackpot. He went to the Bishop's office and there saw the Vicar General, second in command. That was where he started to form a course of action. He located the church at which most of the Hollywood stars worshipped and was given permission to preach at all the masses on the coming Sunday. That was the Church of the Good Shepherd in Beverly Hills.

In an interview with Loretta Young during the week before his first sermon he was warned by Miss Young to preach all he wanted to but not to say anything about his mission. She would undertake to send big movie name-stars to see him after each mass. Thus it was after the masses that he spoke personally with movie stars and made his appeal to them for help. By nightfall, there were several signed contracts donating talent to a network program. All this, of course, would be valid only if Father Peyton could get the network's time. Then as word about the goodwill of the Reverend spread through Hollywood, more and more stars promised to help. Now the list included names like John Charles Thomas, Ethel and Lionel Barrymore, Bing Crosby, Loretta Young, James Stewart, Irene Dunne, Edward G. Robinson, Don Ameche, Gary Cooper, Charles Boyer, Rosalind Russell, Margaret Sullivan, Charles Ruggles, Ruth Hussey, Barry Fitzgerald, Maureen O'Hara, Maureen O'Sullivan, James Gleason, Van Heflin, Fay Bainter, Charles Bickford, William Bendix, Joe E. Brown, June Haver, Susan Peters, Gregory Peck, Jack Haley, Joan Leslie, Roddy McDowell, to name a few of them.

Not all of these persons were of the Catholic faith, but they all did agree that the need for family prayer was a great one. They realized too that they were the persons who could help, that they held tremendous influence, that they could command a following.



Scene from a Family Theatre broadcast over the Mutual Broadcasting System. Actor Van Heflin is at the microphone.

## Coming in June

# ● Scenery Design for the Amateur Stage

By Willard J. Friederich and John H. Fraser

*A clear step-by-step  
approach to making  
workable designs . . .  
a practical guide  
from script  
to finished plans*

The only book dealing exclusively with design for amateurs, this text offers a practical approach to the problem of designing a set, within the limitations of the amateur group, that will satisfy the demands of a given production. Written by the heads of the Drama and Art Departments, respectively, at Marietta College, the book combines a thorough discussion of the requirements of good setting with a treatment of the elements of design, the making of workable designs, and special types of design which will be useful to the beginner.

**THE MACMILLAN COMPANY**

60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y.

True, this article is supposed to be a review of a radio series, and thus far, it has not been. This is not intended to be a sermon, but merely a story of the way a good program came about. What about the program itself? Is it worth hearing? The answer is yes. This is a program well worth hearing. Time on radio is expensive, and the Mutual Broadcasting System has not given up a "slot" worth \$10,000 a week because its executives are religiously inclined. These executives are radio men and realized that the time would have to be filled with a program that would bring a large audience. It is the purpose of "Family Theatre" to reach 10,000,000 homes. If that were achieved, it would mean that Mutual is expanding what it already calls "the world's largest network."

When "Family Theatre" first came on the air, it was not a success. "Variety" panned it. Many people criticized it. The earliest efforts of the "Theatre" preached moral sermons and therefore did not attract the people it wanted to attract. Very few like to be preached to in their own living rooms when settled for an evening of relaxation. However, "Family Theatre" learned its lesson quickly and cut out the preaching. Since radio time is so expensive, sponsors buying time are eager to do as much advertising as possible. When writing a radio script for a sponsored show, the author knows that there are 29 minutes of air time, but that he is only allowed 25 of them. That means that four minutes go for advertising.

On "Family Theatre," "Advertising," if one can call it that, takes only 60 seconds. There is no sermon, only a short development of the

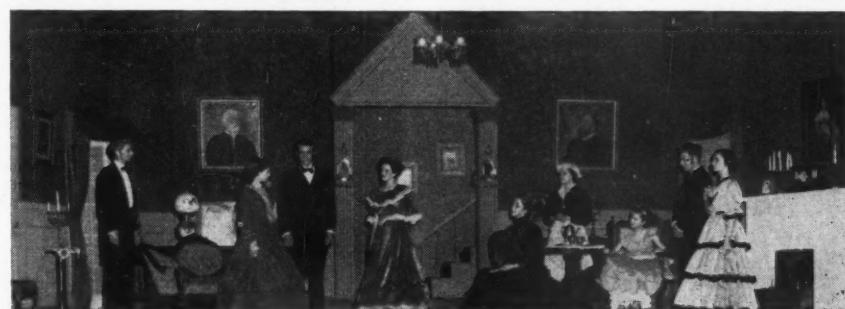
slogan "The family that prays together stays together." (This slogan was prepared by an outdoor advertising company and has been used to great advantage. As a matter of fact, advertising agencies have been of inestimable value in helping to spread the renown of the series. Their signs appear on roadsides, buildings, and all the other media available to advertising men from one coast to the other.)

Many well known stories and quite a few originals have been adapted for radio and presented by "Family Theatre" with the capable acting of noted stars. Scripts for the "Theatre" come from all over the country and are frequently unsolicited. The Editorial Board for the program has quite a job in selecting acceptable material. Often works come from the top professional writers of Hollywood and New York, and yet Father Peyton believes that the best

script was turned out by a layman. It was called "God and a Red Scooter." In it was achieved the difficult task of presenting the voice of God without bombast or irreverence.

"Family Theatre" has brought to its listeners in March of 1950 adaptations of such works as the *Prince and the Pauper* and *Gemelshausen*. One is a thoroughly well known work and the other is a comparatively obscure short story. Both, delivered by name stars (Roddy MacDowall in the former, Jean Cagney in the latter) made enjoyable listening, as is usual with this program.

The fact that this program's audience has grown appreciably since the series came on the air three and a half years ago is testimony enough that Father Peyton's idea is a growing success.



Scene from the production of *Jane Eyre* as given by students of the Hampton, Va., High School (Thespian Troupe 300). William C. Kramer, director.

## THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,  
Los Angeles, California

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1949-50 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

### THE BIG LIFT

FROM history-making adventure, from the hopes and the hopelessness of a war-ravaged people, from the Berlin of today, comes *The Big Lift*, a drama of the Western Powers' airlift. Produced by William Perlberg, written and directed by George Seaton, and starring Montgomery Clift and Paul Douglas, the film, scheduled for May release, is a 20th Century-Fox product.

*The Big Lift*, originally titled *Two Corridors East* after the two meager air-lanes through which the air lift pilots channeled their answer to the Russian blockade of Berlin, is the work of a producer and writer-director team whose motion pictures include *Miracle on 34th Street*, *The Song of Bernadette* and *Apartment for Peggy*.

THE BIG LIFT is happily no backlot version of what happened in, about and above a city seven thousand miles away. George Seaton wrote the original treatment of the story in Berlin. Seaton, with Mrs. Seaton and their two children, were in Germany almost a year. Mr. and Mrs. Perlberg were there several months. Mrs. Seaton worked steadily with her husband coaching German members of the cast. The wardrobes worn by the two young German actresses, Cornell Borchers and Bruni Loebel, who play opposite Clift and Douglas respectively, were Mrs. Perlberg's responsibility.

Headed by the Perlbergs and the Seaton, a staff of 21 persons was sent overseas by the studio. Each was a key man in his own production department: head cameraman Charles Clarke, unit manager Gene Bryant, art director Russell Spencer, head grip Henry Gersen, with American actors Clift and Douglas to top the cast. The rest of the cast and crew were recruited in Germany.

The studio sent one plane-load of production equipment. The remainder quite literally was built from the rubble of Berlin—from the rusted scrap iron and steel, the wrecked planes and artillery, the skeleton buildings. There was no motion picture equipment to be had in Germany, nor new materials.

The locations are not painted canvas on a Hollywood sound stage nor local exteriors dressed up in German petticoats. They are the real thing. They are Berlin's corner of *Monumenten Strasse* and a street whose sign has been erased by bomb fragments. They are Hitler's *Tempelhof* air base with the graveyard at the far end where the airlift used to come in. They are the *U-Bahn* and the *Tiergarten*; *Unter den Linden* in the Russian sector and the *Charlottenburg Chaussee* in the British sector and the *Siegesallee* where the ruined statues are. Or they are *Wiesbaden* and *Rhein-Main* air bases at the border of the Russian zone, where the airlift flights took off. Or the beach at Waikiki where the story begins. Or the Azores where it pauses briefly enroute to Berlin. Only one sound stage was used (at Tempelhof studios), and that for a few interior scenes covering three days of the three-month shooting schedule.

Many of the cast of THE BIG LIFT are men playing themselves . . . air force officers and airmen identified with "Operation Vittles," Berlin press correspondents, photographers and radio broadcasters, Gen. Lucius D. Clay's 51 man Honor Guard Platoon and the Berlin Post Military Band. A technically, as well as a dramatically, authentic motion picture is the fortunate result.



Montgomery Clift and Cornell Borchers in a scene from the new film *The Big Lift*. A bombed section of Berlin is seen in the background.

#### Montgomery Clift as "Danny"

Although Clift's screen career had been brief when he was cast as "Danny," the airlift flight engineer in *The Big Lift*, it had been spectacular. With *Red River* and *The Search* already released and good reports already in circulation concerning his performance in *The Heiress* (released about the time *The Big Lift* was completed), he was an easy choice.

During production of *The Big Lift* Clift was a busy man. In order that he be finished in time to fulfill another commitment in Hollywood, it was necessary to utilize every minute of his time, and George Seaton managed to do just that. Every day, often including Sundays, Clift was either rehearsing or before the camera.

#### Paul Douglas as the Sergeant

In casting for "Hank," tough sergeant, Perlberg and Seaton picked from their own studio an actor whose rise to popularity had been no less rapid than Clift's—Paul Douglas. Formerly one of radio's successful men, Douglas later bowled over Broadway in his first play, *Born Yesterday*, after which 20th Century-Fox signed him for films. In his first picture, *A Letter to Three Wives*, he was established on the screen.

Big, brawny, out-spoken, humorous, smart, capable of comedy that salts laughter with tears, Douglas had himself a time in the role. His good account of himself in *The Big Lift* wasn't achieved without difficulty. There was the matter of Berlin weather. In his most important sequence in the picture, Douglas is supposed to recognize a certain German as one who had tortured him in a prison camp during the war; to stalk him, and finally to beat him up. Three different days were set to make the sequence. And on three different days the weather turned out wrong.

Came the day at last when the weather and the schedule got together and the scene was made. They rehearsed it, Douglas and Nichlisch, the big German actor recruited for the other role. They made one take made one more. "Print that one," said Seaton. It was a good thing. Douglas had done his stuff too well. He had knocked out Nichlisch.

Douglas caused the air force M. P.'s assigned to THE BIG LIFT some trouble, too. It was hot, at least part of the time, while the picture was in production. His sergeant's uniform was heavy. He was constantly unbuttoning his blouse, loosening his tie, pushing his cap to the back of his head. And the M. P.'s were constantly telling him to "tidy up." Once he went with a bona fide sergeant to the sergeant's mess at Tempelhof air base. Before he left he had been told seventeen times to improve his appearance. It was, in fact, "or else" before the meal was over. He never did reveal his identity.

#### German Cinderella Wins Role

Perlberg and Seaton found the feminine lead almost literally in the ruins of Berlin. Blonde and blue-eyed Cornell Borchers lives in a bomb-scarred apartment. She has played small parts in two German pictures that nobody abroad has seen. Looking for a suitable German

# THIRTY RECOMMENDED PLAYS FOR CHILDREN

Each of these plays is listed by the Children's Play Standards Committee of the American Educational Theatre Association, on their recently-revised list of Recommended Full-Length Plays for Children!

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girl with a mastery of the English language, Perlberg and Seaton were shown stills of Cornell, later saw a scene from her German picture, *Martina*, in which she plays the second feminine lead.

Daughter of a Prussian officer of World War I who later was a professor at Koenigsberg University in Hanover, Cornell had never been out of Germany. She was a school girl when World War II started; she was pressed into service, first as a farm worker, then as a worker in a munitions factory. After the war she entered dramatic school in Berlin, was given her first film role by A. M. Rabenalt, German film director.

### Bruni Loebel Completes Quartet

Fraulein Loebel, petite and charming, is a stage and screen star in her own country. But, like Cornell Borchers, she is unknown abroad. She, too, speaks perfect English. She learned it after the war, when she and a few others of a German film company were given work by an American Special Services unit whose job it was to provide entertainment for G.I.'s stationed near Salzburg. The German troupe whipped up two shows that were so successful that they were with the Americans for a year.

From the lips of "Gerda," whom Bruni plays in *The Big Lift*, comes the line that symbolizes the meaning of George Seaton's story. In love with "Hank" and wanting to go with him to America, she says: "No, I stay here. To see someday the right kind of Germany will take much work. And if all of us who want

something different and better, look for it someplace else—what happens here? No—I will stay."

From the first day of shooting, freakish weather plagued the company. On that day, fog, wind, rain and hail prevailed in disconcerting succession and it stormed daily for three weeks thereafter. Since the airlift had operated regardless of bad weather, Seaton went on shooting. But at the end of those three weeks came weather so perfect it was sometimes almost impossible to match earlier shots. On a few occasions Seaton feared he would have to complete certain sequences indoors, where bad weather could be simulated. This, fortunately, was avoided.

Monty Clift and Cornell Borchers actually played a scene in the Russian sector, Unter den Linden. Although for obvious reasons (having to do with the Russian attitude toward Americans and American projects) it was planned at first to erect in the American zone a gigantic facsimile of this famous spot, Seaton never gave up hope that the location could be used, and this was finally arranged through the British. A skeleton crew with Seaton himself operating the camera shot the sequences required, interrupted only by the usual 4 p. m. Russian open-air broadcast in German.

One night when the company was shooting at the subway station, Cornell Borchers, returning from a midnight supper, bought some bananas (35 cents each) from a vendor. When she returned to the location, she distributed them

among a small group of children who had been watching the action all evening. The youngsters accepted the fruit gratefully, but when Cornell left them she was crying. The children had tried to eat the bananas, skin and all, and she had to explain that they must be peeled. Half-starved victims of war, and of a peace that, for them, is not much better, they had never eaten bananas before.

Although the studio and its head grip, Henry Gersen, had been assured that "all equipment necessary to production" would be available in Berlin, this assurance proved to be ill-founded. There was nothing to work with. Gersen, arriving in Berlin two months before production started, rolled up his sleeves and got to work. First, he bought an old dentist's chair and with that as a base, he designed and had built from Berlin's war-made rubble heaps, the camera dolly for cameraman Charles Clarke, Century stands, circular dolly track, reflector frames, bobonett frames—all of the mechanical equipment needed—were ready the day shooting began.

*The Big Lift* is not a documentary in the usual sense of the word, for its wealth of authentic atmosphere is used as a background for a love story that is fictional. But such is the dramatic persuasion of the locations, the cast, the story itself, that the picture becomes an experience that few moviegoers will forget.

## THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library  
New York 18, N.Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Requests should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Many drama groups subscribing to this magazine, observe, no doubt, the celebration of the first International Theatre Month in March. Here, in New York, a great many interesting manifestations of the ability of theatre to promote international understanding and good will were demonstrated.

Most of the activities marking the month were under the auspices of the International Theatre Institute and the American National Theatre and Academy. Special attention was accorded those Broadway attractions which have some international note about them. Gian-Carlo Menotti's *The Consul*, Ludwig Bemelmans' *Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep*, Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Several of the off-Broadway groups cooperated, too. The drama group of the Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Association presented the Chinese fantasy, *The Emperor's New Clothes* (as adapted by Charlotte Chorpenning). The Equity-Library Theatre, the Dramatic Workshop and On-Stage had special productions.

Another phase of International Theatre Month was demonstrated by some of the library and museum activities. At the Brander Matthews Dramatic Museum of Columbia University, the third week of the month was entirely given over to celebration. A memorial exhibit to Prof. George Odell, the author of the fifteen volume *ANNALS OF THE NEW YORK STAGE* was inaugurated. Speakers included Joseph Wood Krutch, Walter Hampden and Maurice Valency. The latter is the adapter of Giraudoux' *THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT* and *THE ENCHANTED*. Even the Fifth

Avenue windows of the United Nations information Center were devoted to a theatre exhibit. Most interestingly displayed were photographs of the New York, London and Paris productions of Tennessee Williams' *A STREET-CAR NAMED DESIRE*.

### Heartbreak House

Partially to aid in the festivities and partially to share in the current Shaw boom, On-Stage produced the sage of Ayot St. Lawrence's *Heartbreak House*. This play had been produced here professionally only twice before - by the Theatre Guild and by the Mercury Theatre a decade ago. The play owes much to Chekov and, in particular, to *The Cherry Orchard*. The subtitle to the work is: "A fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes." The people of *Heartbreak House*, however, are eradicated by man's latest weapons of war rather than by the coming on of a new social order. Shaw's preface to the play (written in 1919) read: "I had to withhold *Heartbreak House* from the footlights during the war, for the Germans might on any night have turned the last act from play into earnest and even then might not have waited for their cues."

The play is a difficult one for younger actors to produce. More than in most dramas, the characters require considerable maturity. The tempo of the play is steady. There are great sections of talk without action - superb talk, to be sure, but talk which requires authority and the backing of age. Captain Shotover

(portrayed most memorably by Orson Welles in the Mercury production) is almost Shaw's self-portrait. It must be stated to On-Stage's credit that most of the production carried most forcibly. Only occasionally did one regret Shaw's strictures against cutting his plays.

This group has announced James Bridie's *Tobias and the Angel* as their next offering. The tentative schedule for their summer season at the Cherry Lane Theatre in Greenwich Village includes: *Countess Kathleen* by Yeats, *Heavenly Express* by Stork (a new comedy), *Fiorenza* by Thomas Mann and Henry James' *The Other Room*. If the other groups provide such a repertory, it will be a very exciting summer in New York.

### All You Need Is One Good Break

One of the season's near misses was Arnold Manoff's *All You Need Is One Good Break*. It was not hard to imagine its history as one sat watching Martin Rothman do battle with the world. Its producers, Monte Proser and Joseph Kipness (each of whom operate more profitable enterprises outside the theatre), considered the script a second *Death of a Salesman*. Sam Love was called in to design a multi-plane setting which could encompass the script's many locals. Even neon lights were incorporated to divulge to the audience the hero's mental processes. All in all, it was a very expensive looking dud.

The production of the play seems to have been a series of stormy rehearsals. At length, John Berry (who enacted the leading role) and J. Edward Bromberg shared the credit for the direction. The first-string critics justly lambasted the work. They pointed out its lack of subtlety, its triteness and its crudity. The play closed at the conclusion of its first Saturday evening performance. The producers, however, still felt that their play deserved a hearing . . . or could the possible sale of the film rights have had some power in their decision to reopen. Most of you know, I imagine, that unless a play is performed a certain number of times all of the proceeds from the sale of the film rights go to the author. If the play has given the necessary number of performances, the producer gets a share of the Hollywood gold.

Whatever the motive, the town was flooded with "two-for-ones," by presenting these coupons at the box-office, two people can secure admission for very little more than the normal single admission price. Large newspaper ads were run and radio commercials were employed. *All You Need Is One Good Break* seemed, indeed, to have been the slogan of the Messers. Proser and Kipness. Soon, however, the fight was given up and the play slipped into a well deserved oblivion.

### The Velvet Glove

A much more interesting production is Rosemary Casey's *The Velvet Glove*. This was awarded the Christophers' prize last year as being the outstanding play on a Catholic theme. It has been produced and directed by Guthrie



Katharine Hepburn as Rosalind, Cloris Leachman as Celia, and Jay Robinson as Le Beau in a scene from the Theatre Guild's production of *As You Like It* now playing on Broadway. (Photograph by Vandamm)

McClintic with Grace George and Walter Hampden in the leading roles. The theme is the controversial one of the threat of Communism in the educational field. Professor Pearson, a lay faculty member of the school of the Convent of St. Paul, has been charged with teaching subversive ideas. Mother-General Hildebrand and Monsignor Burke believe him to be innocent of these charges. They fear, too, that the integrity of their work is at stake in the issue and fight most avidly for that.

One can discern how timely a play this is and its greater implications. Some of the force has been taken from the script for a non-Catholic audience by the play's dependence upon a fairly good knowledge of parochial behavior on the part of the audience. Had the play been set in a non-Church college and played in almost exactly the same way; it would, I feel, enjoy greater favor.

It is a great pleasure to have Grace George active again in the Broadway theatre. She had not been seen hereabouts in almost ten years—since she co-starred with C. Aubrey Smith in *Spring Again*. She is one of our gentlest actresses. Her manner is as warm as ever. That Mother Hildebrand is not one of her greatest characterizations, is not the fault of Miss George. In the production, too, Barbara Brady (the daughter of Katherine Alexander and the late William A. Brady, Jr.) is making her New York debut. Miss Alexander is now playing Mrs. William Loman in the London production of *Death of a Salesman*. Miss Brady lends considerable charm and poise to the role of Mother Hildebrand's secretary and the fiancee of Prof. Pearson.

### The Bird Cage

The most interesting of the recent plays which have come my way is Arthur Laurents' *The Bird Cage*. Some of you may recall my great enthusiasm for Mr. Laurents' *Home of the Brave*—still, I feel, the best of the plays to come out of World War II. The recent cinema version of the play retained much of the play's power, but not all. Several post-Broadway productions have been given the play and—even after several sittings—*Home of the Brave* stands up as a great play.

Arthur Laurents was one of the young playwrights we discussed in a series in DRAMATICS two seasons ago. His one play between the first and *THE BIRD CAGE*—a work called, *HEARTSONG*—closed during the out-of-town tryout. His activities, of late, have been confined to Hollywood. He wrote the celluloid versions of *THE SNAKE PIT* and *ROPE*. One feels that, in spite of his success on the West Coast and the lack of it in the East, Mr. Laurents will continue to write for the theatre. His is the forceful talk the theatre needs.

The title of the play is taken from the night club in which the action is set. Wally Williams, the owner of the club, his family, his employees and his associates all share in the ills of the world.

### SCENE DESIGNS RECOMMENDED FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE

Among the interesting articles scheduled for publication in DRAMATICS is a series on scene designs recommended for the high school theatre, written by Professor W. J. Friederich, Head of the Theatre Department, Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio. Professor Friederich's articles suggest a number of ways for staging high school plays, without making use of the usual interior box set commonly used by amateur drama groups. The articles will later be reprinted in booklet form. —EDITOR

### Designing Scenery for the Stage

By A. S. Gillette

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### Late Arrivals

There are not a great many productions to come along before the theatre season 1949-50 gets turned over to the recorders and the historians. One of the most eagerly awaited events is the revival of Sir James M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*. This play has been a favorite since it was first presented with Nina Boucicault in the title role in 1904. For many years, it was an annual revival in the English theatre. It was first presented here with Maude Adams and was in the repertory of this great actress for many years. It provided one of my very early theatre-going thrills when Marilyn Miller played the title role in 1926. A bit later, the film came my way and I thrilled again to Peter's teaching Wendy and the boys to fly, the house in the woods and the miraculous rescue of the children from the clutches of the pirate, Captain Hook. Jean Arthur is enacting Peter and Boris Karloff is to double as Mr. Darling and Captain Hook.

One wonders whether the first-string drama critics at the premiere performance of Shakespeare's *AS YOU LIKE IT*, agreed that the work was not up to the dramatist's standards. Perhaps it was turned out in a great rush on order for some royal occasion. The play, in any event, seems today to be about the least amusing of the Bard's comedies. The complications of the plot are almost painfully long in being resolved and the verse has mighty few of the great flights of fancy one looks for in Shakespearean comedy. One of the Rosalind-Orlando love scenes in the forest of Arden, the

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first scene of the melancholy Jacques and the lovely epilogue are oases "in this desert inaccessible".

Miss Hepburn's chief lack—and this applies to almost the entire cast—is a lack of poetry in the speech. The lyrical quality is quite absent throughout the production. Of the principals, Ernest Thesiger gives the most distinguished performance as Jacques. Cloris Leachman is a most attractive Celia. Dayton Lummis as Frederick (The Dirty Duke) and Aubrey Mather as the Banished Duke are excellent. William Prince struggles valiantly with the role of Orlando but fails to convey much of

(Continued on next page)

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### THEATRE ON BROADWAY

(Continued from page 19)

the character to the audience. Whitford Kane brings his considerable knowledge of Shakespearean acting to the role of Corin.

Jean Anouilh's CRY OF THE PEACOCK is scheduled to make its bow late next month. The New York City Center of Music and Drama will provide another set of plays after the current opera season, but the schedule has not yet been announced. One of the possibilities is a return of A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE with Uta Hagen and Anthony Quinn in leading roles. Many of you may have seen this company during its recent tour.

### Awards

Before the books are closed on the season, the annual prizes must be awarded. The first of these will be the Antoinette Perry Memorial Awards, which will be bestowed next Sunday evening. These go for outstanding theatre service of various kinds—acting, directing, designing, writing, etc. A little later the Pulitzer committee and the New York Drama Critic's Circle will hold their sessions. Leading candidates for these (which must go to an American author) are William Inge for Come Back, Little Sheba, Carson McCullers for The Member of the Wedding, William Archibald for The Innocents (adapted from Henry James' The Turn of the Screw), Gian-Carlo Menotti for The

Consul. It seems almost certain that the Critics' Circle award for the best play by a non-American playwright will go to T. S. Eliot for The Cocktail Party. There are seemingly, no rivals in this category.

The players awards are—as ever-bitterly disputed. The Clarence Derwent Awards, which go to new players, seem destined for one of the following: Brandon de Wilde and Julie Harris of The Member of the Wedding, Patricia Neway of The Consul, Don Hamner of The Man, Brenda Lewis of Regina, Julian Mayfield of Lost in the Stars.

There has been little of note in the musical field compared to other recent seasons. Some citations might go to Maxwell Anderson and Kurt Weill for their converting Alan Paton's CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY into LOST IN THE STARS. Marc Blitzstein may be named for his work on REGINA, which was based upon Lillian Hellman's THE LITTLE FOXES. Then, too, the performances of Carol Channing and Yvonne Adair in GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES are worth considerable rejoicing.

Harold Clurman, Robert Lewis, Rouben Mamoulian and Cedric Hardwicke rank among the top directors of the season. One could go on indefinitely recalling the season's thrills. Recollections of theatre experiences are among the happiest heritage of theatre attendance. Until the lights go up on the new season, therefore, good luck to you and joyful theatre-going!

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Kittanning High School, Kittanning, Pa.  
New Castle High School, New Castle, Pa.  
The Peoria Players, Peoria, Illinois  
Union High School, Whittier, California

Hawthorne High School, Hawthorne, N. J.  
Eureka High School, Eureka, Illinois  
North Tarrytown High School, North Tarrytown, N. Y.  
Sioux City High School, Sioux City, Iowa  
Lakewood Players, Lakewood, Ohio  
Ogdensburg Free Academy High School, Ogdensburg, N. Y.  
Waukesha Junior and Senior High School, Waukesha, Wis.  
Indiana Junior High School, Columbus, Ohio  
Paynesville Independent High School, Paynesville, Minn.  
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to an attractive, somewhat older man, who, trying hard to be fair and give Jenny a chance to meet eligible youngsters, almost risks losing the girl he really cares for. But it turns out that this man has been Jenny's choice from the very first. Her consenting to go out with an amusing but somewhat overenthusiastic follower of jive, has been in the line of duty, and the young man's amusing antics end up by boring her. The whole play is made doubly attractive and amusing by the presence of several young girls and the young boy above mentioned, all of whom somehow manage to make Jenny "hep." Or, rather, so they think, since Jenny remains to the end a very lovely, simple and attractive girl, and her union with the man she loves is a proper solution to all the plots and plans of the various characters.

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# Activities of The National Thespian Society

DURING the past twenty-one years, The National Thespian Society has sponsored many publications, projects, and conferences in the interests of dramatic arts at the high school level. However, at no time in the past has the Society sponsored as many activities of this nature as it now has in progress. In response to many requests received from dramatics directors for information concerning the nature of these new activities, DRAMATICS is pleased to present below a descriptive listing, along with the names of writers and committee members.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

No. 1. *Directory of Plays For All-Women Casts* (1944-49). The purpose of this publication is to make available a selective listing of plays for all-female casts published between 1944 and 1949, serving as a supplement to the *Directory of Plays for All-Female Casts* published by the Society in the summer of 1944. Preparation of the new directory was assigned to Professor Wm. Ellis Jones of Intermont College, Bristol, Va. Copies of the new directory may now be secured from the National Thespian Society at 60c each.

No. 2. *Directory of Stage Equipment and Supply Houses* (revised edition). The purpose of this publication is to make available an up-to-date edition of the Directory published by the Society two years ago, under the editorship of W. Fredric Plette. The revised edition, now available from the Society at 25 cents per copy (15 cents per copy on orders of 10 or more), lists the names and addresses of many firms, indicating theatre supplies and services furnished. (A special printing of this Directory has been made for distribution among members of the American Educational Theatre Association, Alpha Psi Omega and Delta Psi Omega Collegiate dramatic fraternities.)

No. 3. *Theatre Enjoyment*. This publication, will bring under one cover the series of articles on theatre by Talbot Pearson which are being published in DRAMATICS during the current school year. Copies may be ordered from the Society at 60 cents each after August 15, 1950.

No. 4. *How They Were Staged* (Supplement No. 4), edited by Earl W. Blank. This supplement will bring under one cover the seven articles which are appearing this season in DRAMATICS under the department, "The Play of the Month." Copies may be obtained from the Society by September 1, 1950, at 60 cents each.

No. 5. *Theatre Publicity and Public Relations*. This publication will present a list of schemes and devices which give effective publicity to high school theatre productions. This booklet will also present information on an effective public relations program for the educational theatre, along with a number of publicity programs actually employed by high school directors. This publication will be available September 1, 1950. Price will be announced at that time.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

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George Hodson, Mt. Vernon, Wash., High School.  
Mellie Luck, Isaac C. Elston High School, Michigan City, Ind.  
Henry Senber, Public Relations Representative for DEATH  
OF A SALESMAN, New York City.

No. 6. *Styles of Scenic Designs Recommended for High School Theatre Productions*. The contents of this publication, will be prepared by W. G. Freiderick, director, Marietta College Theatre, will first be published as a series of articles in DRAMATICS during the 1950-51 school year. Articles will be reprinted in booklet form as soon as they have all appeared in DRAMATICS. Date of publication and price to be announced during the 1950-51 season.

No. 7. *The Well-Planned and Well-Equipped High School Theatre*. This publication is being prepared for the Society by Professor Horace W. Robinson, theatre director at the University of Oregon. Certain parts of this publication may be published in DRAMATICS in the fall of 1950. Date when publication will be available and price will be announced later.

No. 8. *Stage Lighting for the High School Theatre*. This publication will consist of a series of seven articles scheduled for publication in DRAMATICS during the 1950-51 school year. Articles are being written by Joel E. Rubin, graduate student in the Department of Drama, Yale University, under the direction of Professor Stanley McCandless. Mr. Rubin is a specialist in stage lighting. Articles will be reprinted in booklet form at the close of the 1950-51 season.

No. 9. *Television Appreciation*. This publication will also consist of a series of seven articles scheduled for publication in DRAMATICS during the coming school year. These articles are now being prepared by DRAMATICS radio editor, Si Mills, with the cooperation of staff members of the Television Studios of The National Broadcasting Company. Articles will appear in booklet form at the close of the 1950-51 season.

No. 10. *Dramatic Arts* (Textbook for Secondary Schools). Title subject to change. This textbook is being prepared in response to a wide-spread demand for a publication which offers adequate material for a semester's course in dramatic arts, with the textbook adapted for use by students as well as teachers. A committee is now engaged in the preparation of a broad outline of the proposed content for this publication. A number of courses as now being offered by dramatic arts directors are being examined by the committee. The writing of the textbook will be done by one person (name to be announced) working under the direction of the Committee and especially hired for this assignment by The National Thespian Society. The preliminary draft of this book is expected to be ready for classroom testing during the 1950-51 season, with publication tentatively set for the summer of 1951.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Marion L. Stuart, Champaign, Ill., Senior High School (Chairman).  
June Mitchell, Revere, Mass., High School (Assistant Chairman).  
Mabel Marie Ellefson, Springfield, Ore., Senior High School.  
Viola Stone, Paragould, Ark., High School.  
Earl W. Blank, Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Okla.  
Dina Rees Evans, Heights High School, Cleveland, Ohio.  
Dorothy Fitzgerald, George Washington High School, Danville, Va.  
Dorothy M. Crane, Newport News, Va., High School.  
Wm. J. Knapp, Wyandotte High School, Kansas City, Kan.

## PROJECTS

1. *Summer School Training Program for High School Dramatic Arts Directors*. A program especially geared to the needs of high school teachers called upon to direct dramatics will be offered this summer (see advertisement on page 11) by the Department of Speech of the Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, with the cooperation of The National Thespian Society. This special training program, offered primarily for high school teachers with limited knowledge of the educational theatre, is built around a core course, "Organization and Management of the High School Dramatics Program" taught by Blandford Jennings, veteran high school theatre director.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Blandford Jennings, Clayton, Mo., High School (Chairman).  
June Mitchell, Revere, Mass., High School (Assistant Chairman).  
Robert D. Sheets, Roosevelt High School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.  
Eve Strong, Kenmore, New York, High School.

2. *Qualifications for High School Dramatic Arts Directors*. The purpose of this project is to determine what constitutes adequate academic and professional qualifications for high school dramatic arts directors on the basis of views expressed by Thespian sponsors. This project will also determine what courses teacher-training institutions should offer to provide directors of dramatic arts. The committee is expected to com-

plete its work by September 1, 1950, with its findings to be published in DRAMATICS, and later reprinted for wide distribution among school officials and teacher-training institutions.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Lloyd E. Roberts, Tucson, Arizona, Senior High School (Chairman).  
Marion Underwood, Glendale, Calif., High School (Assistant Chairman).  
Mary Parrish, Pontiac, Mich., Senior High School.  
Jean Donahey, Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School.  
Daniel Turner, Aldrich High School, Providence, R. I.

No. 3 *16MM Film on High School Theatre*. This project calls for the preparation of a 16 mm black and white sound film, running time about 20 minutes, which tells the story of the high school theatre in terms of activities involved, student and faculty participation, cultural and educational benefits to the school and community. Film will be designed primarily for showing before P.T.A. organizations, school administrators and parents. Prints to be made available on a rental basis from The National Thespian Society. While plans for this project are somewhat tentative at the present time, it is hoped that this film will be available in the next two years. A committee has been appointed to submit ideas and suggestions for the scenario for this film.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Marion L. Underwood, Glendale, Calif., High School (Chairman).  
Lockwood E. Wiley, Wood River, Ill., High School (Assistant Chairman).  
Roberta Seibert, Webster Groves, Mo., High School.  
Eve Strong, Kenmore, N. Y. High School.  
Earl W. Blank, Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Okla.  
Harry T. Leeper, East Fairmont, W. Va., High School.  
Don Poston, Holmes High School, Covington, Ky.

No. 4. *Filmstrips for the High School Theatre*. This project calls for the preparation of the following information: 1. Survey to determine to what extent filmstrips are being used at the present time by dramatic arts teachers and directors affiliated with The National Thespian Society. 2. Preparation of a directory of filmstrips now available which are especially recommended for use by high school dramatic arts teachers and directors. 3. Investigation of theatre subjects for which filmstrips should be manufactured for use primarily by high schools. The committee has been directed to complete its work by September 1, 1950, with findings to be made available to Thespian-affiliated schools by early fall.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

B. Davis Evans, Spanish Fork, Utah, High School (Chairman).  
Marie Oehrle, Salem, N. J., High School, (Assistant Chairman).  
Florence M. Pass, Ensley High School, Omaha, Nebr.  
Myrna Jones, Central High School, Omaha, Nebr.  
Lillie Mae Bauer, Washington Irving High School, Clarksburg.  
Constance Case, West Allis, Wisc., Central High School.

No. 5. *Certification of Dramatic Arts Teachers*. The purpose of this project is to obtain the following information: 1. Academic and professional standards required at the present time by state and regional certification agencies for teachers and directors of dramatic arts at the high school level. 2. Survey of state and regional certification agencies concerning requirements placed upon a subject to warrant certification of teachers in that subject. The committee has been directed to complete its investigation as of September 1, 1950, with findings to be made available to Thespian-affiliated schools by early fall.

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

Mabel Marie Ellefson, Springfield, Ore., High School (Chairman).  
Wilhelmina Hedde, Adamson High School, Dallas, Texas (Assistant Chairman).  
Genevieve Dickinson, Wm. Fleming High School, Roanoke, Va.  
B. E. Moeller, Rochester, Minn., Senior High School.  
Ethel Walker, Cumberland Co. High School, Crossville, Tenn.  
Florence Bruhn, Watertown, So. Dak., High School.  
Catharine Howard, Mt. Vernon, Ind., High School.

No. 6 *Junior High School Society in Dramatic Arts*. Plans for the organization of a national society devoted to dramatic

arts at the junior high school level were approved by The National Thespian Society two years ago. A preliminary survey of the reaction of junior high school dramatics directors was made by the Society in the fall of 1949. A large committee composed of junior high school dramatic arts directors and principals is now at work on a national constitution for the new organization. The society will be formally launched with the opening of schools in the fall of 1950.

#### CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES, CLINICS

1. *Eastern Regional Conference*. This conference was held at the Wm. Penn Senior High School, York, Pa., on April 14, 15, 1950, under the general direction of Thespian Regional Director Leon C. Miller of Pennsylvania. While the two-day gathering was sponsored primarily for high school directors and students affiliated with The National Thespian Society, admission was open to non-members. (A report on this conference will appear in DRAMATICS this coming fall.)

2. *National Business Convention*. This convention will be held in New York City, December 28, 29, meeting in conjunction with the annual conventions of the Speech Association of America and the American Educational Theatre Association. The convention will consist of two morning sessions, December 28, 29, devoted entirely to reports of national officers and committees, reporting on the progress of the Society for the period 1945-50, reports on the progress of various committees, formulation of plans and election of officers for the period 1950-55. These sessions will be open only to teachers and students affiliated with the Society. The Society will sponsor a third session, tentatively scheduled for the afternoon of December 29, to be addressed by an outstanding personality of the theatre. The speaker's name will be announced in the fall. While this meeting will be sponsored primarily for Thespian teachers and directors, admission will be open to all who may care to attend.

3. *Western Regional Conference*. This conference is scheduled for June, 1951, at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City. Morning, afternoon and evening sessions will be devoted to addresses, discussions and demonstrations on various phases of theatre activity at the high school level. While the conference will be sponsored primarily for Thespian teachers and directors, admission will be open to all who care to enroll. The conference program will be announced in DRAMATICS during the 1950-51 school season.

4. *Florida State Conference*. This state meeting, held annually, will be held this season on May 5, 6, at the Peabody Auditorium and Princess Isenna Hotel, Daytona Beach, Florida, with members of Thespian Troupe 35 of the Mainland Senior High School, Daytona Beach, under the direction of troupe sponsor Barbara Dodson as sponsors and hosts. See page 10 in this issue for additional information. This meeting is under the general supervision of State Regional Director Mildred E. Murphy of the Orlando, Fla., Senior High School.

5. *Fourth National Dramatic Arts Conference*. Plans for this gathering will be made following the election of new national officers at the Business Convention scheduled for December 28, 29 of this year in New York City. (See item 2 above.) While no definite date or place has been set for this conference, it will probably be held at a midwestern college or university in June of 1952.

6. *Drama Clinics*. With the opening of the 1950-51 school year, the Society will launch its fourth annual series of drama clinics for secondary schools, sponsored with the cooperation of various colleges and universities. A report of drama clinics held during the 1949-50 season will be published in September of this year. Among the most successful of these clinics held during the past two years are those held at the Ohio State University, Bethany College (W. Va.), Kent State University, Linfield College, Bowling Green State University and the Pasadena Playhouse.

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2. With a Manager who has produced 170 Shows in his 11 Seasons here.
3. With an Equity Cast and Visiting Stars.
4. Yet small enough so that there are Roles for all Apprentices.
5. And also in Apprentice Productions, Professionally Directed.
6. Where you act in at least 7 plays.
7. Where there are two Classes Daily, Monday through Friday.
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9. At a playhouse and Residence Right beside the Sea.

Some of recent Stars include Ilka Chase, Alfred Drake, Glenda Farrell, Burgess Meredith, Buddy Ebsen, Libby Holman, Edward E. Horton, Marsha Hunt, Guy Kibbee, Fred Stone, Gloria Swanson, Dame May Whitty.

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T. C. UPHAM, Director

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- Students appear in leading roles.
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★ ★ ★

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"IN THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS  
OF VIRGINIA"

Mention *Dramatics*



Scene from *The Willow and I*. Presented by members of Thespian Troupe 885 at the Bayless High School, St. Louis, Mo. Directed by Estelle Elmore.

### SPECIAL THESPIAN MEMBERSHIP OFFER!

For High School Teachers and Directors Only  
Offer Good Until November 1, 1950

HIGH school dramatic arts teachers and directors not at present affiliated with THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY may now obtain a one year membership in the organization on the basis of a special membership arrangement announced by the National Council and Board of Trustees. The offer expires November 1 of this year.

This special offer provides the following publications and services:

#### PUBLICATIONS:

Subscription for DRAMATICS magazine (8 issues, October through May)  
\*Copy of DIRECTORY OF PLAYS FOR ALL-WOMEN CASTS (1944-49). Edited by Wm. Ellis Jones.  
\*Copy of DIRECTORY OF STAGE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY HOUSES (Revised edition), Edited by W. Fredric Plette.  
\*Copy of THEATRE ENJOYMENT. By Talbot Pearson  
\*Copy of Supplement No. 4, HOW THEY WERE STAGED. Edited by Earl W. Blank.  
\*Copy of THEATRE PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. Prepared by Committee.  
(\*These publications available as of September 1.)

#### SERVICES:

LIBRARY LOAN SERVICE. (Play books may be borrowed for reading purposes from the Society's large collection of plays. Loan period of 30 days on each order of 12 books during months of June, July and August. Loan period 20 days effective with September 1. Each order carries a postage and handling charge of 50¢.)

ROYALTY ADJUSTMENT SERVICE. (The Society maintains a royalty adjustment service with all leading play publishers in the United States. Adjustments are determined by publishers on the basis of information furnished by producing group through Thespian National Office.)

PLACEMENT BUREAU. (This service furnished on a strictly confidential basis, entirely free of charge to applicant.)

ADVISORY SERVICES. (The Society furnishes advisory services in a wide range of activities pertaining to the high school theatre, including play selection, stagecraft, make-up and stage lighting.)

#### SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP PRICE, \$5.00\*

(Notice: Directors holding this special membership who apply for a Thespian Troupe Charter by not later than March 1, 1951, will receive credit for the sum of \$2.00 towards payment of the standard charter fee.)

DETACH HERE

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY

College Hill Station  
Cincinnati 24, Ohio

195

Gentlemen: I enclose the sum of \$5.00 as payment in full for a one year special membership in The National Thespian Society. Please furnish me with a year's subscription for DRAMATICS magazine, and all publications and services which are included in this special membership offer. I understand, furthermore, that I may apply the sum of \$2.00 paid under this special membership as part payment on a Troupe Charter in the event that my high school affiliates with The National Thespian Society before March 1, 1950.

M

(Please Print Full Name

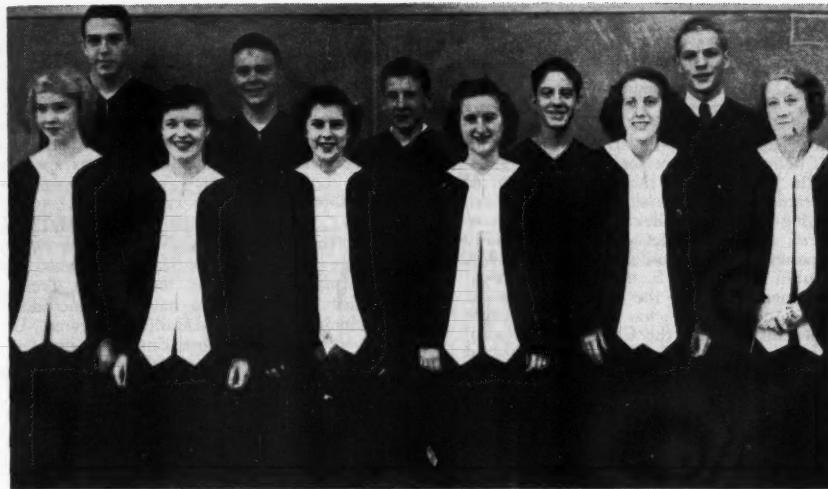
High School (Academy)

(City)

(Zone)

(State)

(This form may be copied on an ordinary sheet of paper).



Members of Thespian Troupe 597 of the Central High School (Thespian Troupe 597), Helena, Arkansas. Georgia Reichardt, Sponsor. Mrs. Reichardt is seen at the extreme right.

## On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with  
The National Thespian Society

### Morrilton, Ark.

MORRILTON High School (Thespian Troupe 438): *Your Time Is Up, Let Me Grow Up, Goodnight Please, If Men Played Cards As Women Do, Texas* (original play written by Thespians). Monthly meetings of the dramatics groups are given to a study of current Broadway plays, production techniques, reviews of stage plays and reports on outstanding films seen by members. Marie Koehler is serving as troupe sponsor and dramatics director. At least a dozen students are expected to receive Thespian membership this season.—Dorothy McConnell, Secretary

### Litchfield, Conn.

LITCHFIELD High School (Thespian Troupe 456): *Charm, Our Town*. One of the outstanding projects of this season at this school is the series of bi-monthly radio programs presented over a local station. Among the radio plays given are *Sorry, Wrong Number, Speak O' the Devil* and *Macbeth*. Meetings of the dramatics groups are given to various projects including the selection of radio plays and means of raising funds. Shirley R. March is directing dramatics. At least ten students are expected to be honored with Thespian membership by the close of this semester.—Rosemary Hewitt, Secretary

### Pendleton, Oregon

PENDLETON High School (Thespian Troupe 466): *Great Expectations, Our Hearts Were Young and Gay, Angel Street*. Current plays, costuming and play selection are among the subjects receiving attention at the regular meetings held during the season. Under the leadership of sponsor David P. Torbet some thirty students are expected to receive membership in the troupe. — Jean Clouston, Secretary

### Cedar Rapids, Iowa

FANKLIN High School (Thespian Troupe 468): *Stardust, Oh, Susanna*. This season's highly successful program also includes the

production of several one-act plays under the direction of troupe sponsor Ethel Roberg. The production of *Oh, Susanna*, scheduled for production on April 28, 29, is expected to have a cast of about ninety students.—Sally Carringer, Secretary

### Montgomery, Ala.

SIDNEY LANIER High School (Thespian Troupe 470): *The Oracle and Father Time* (original), *Joint Owners in Spain, Lady of the Crossroads, You Can't Take It With You, The High Window, La Posada*. Pantomime and the study of current Broadway plays are among the subjects to which dramatics students devote their regular meetings, with troupe sponsor Alma Lacy H. Dixon in charge. This season's extremely successful production of plays is expected to produce at least twenty-four candidates for Thespian membership.—Barbara Searcy, Secretary

### Deathsville, Ala.

HOLTVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 493): *Letters to Lucerne or Tomorrow the World, Jerry Breaks a Date, Who Gets the Car Tonight? The Doctor In Spite of Himself*. One of the outstanding social events of the fall term was the Masquerade Ball sponsored by Thespians on December 16 under the supervision of troupe sponsors Mary U. Moore and Sarah H. Cowling. Meetings are given to the study of make-up, stage management, rehearsals and play directing.—Jini Mooney, Secretary

#### THEATRE HOLIDAY TOURS

If you plan to tour England and Continental Europe this summer, you should request information on the series of Theatre Holiday Tours which are being organized to such well known theatre centers as Stratford-on-Avon, Edinburgh, London, Paris, Provence, and Oberammergau. Full particulars may be obtained by writing to Theatre Holiday Plan, 77, Dean Street, London, W. 1, England.

### Hot Springs, S. Dak.

HOT SPRINGS High School (Thespian Troupe 488): *Uncle Fred Flits By*. At the time of this report plans were going forward with the production of the junior class play scheduled for March. Plans also call for the production of three one-act plays in May. About twenty students are expected to qualify for Thespian membership by the close of the year, with Donna Comstock as troupe sponsor.—Mary Nell Hall, Secretary

### Lake Charles, La.

LAKE CHARLES High School (Thespian Troupe 471): *Special Guest, The Whole Town's Laughing*. Dramatics club meetings are held twice a month with make-up, stage directions and reviews of Broadway plays forming the main subjects for discussion, with troupe sponsor Beverly Thibodeaux in charge. A dozen students will be honored with Thespian membership by the close of this year.—Dot Jenner, Secretary

### Ceredo-Kenova, W. Va.

CEREDO-KENOVA High School (Thespian Troupe 115): *We Shook the Family Tree, Antic Spring, Comin' 'Round the Mountain*. At the time of this writing rehearsals were being conducted on *Antic Spring* which Thespians were entering in the district drama festival at Marshall College on March 25. The current season has also seen a number of other activities. Dramatics students have presented several radio programs over station WPLH and WSAZ. Programs have been presented in observance of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Monthly meetings of the dramatics groups have been given to the study of stagecraft, make-up, plays and addresses given by guest speakers. This lively dramatics program owes much of its success to the effective leadership of troupe sponsor Nan S. Hutchinson.—Pat Crockett, Secretary

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#### DIRECTORY OF

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This invaluable source of information for theatre workers at all levels, including teachers and students of the drama, has been brought up to date, listing more than 200 names and addresses of firms. Firms are listed under 19 headings including auditorium equipment, make-up, properties, sound effects, tickets and posters, wigs, costumes, and scenery hardware. You can't do without it.

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#### Directory of Plays for All-Women Casts\* (1944-1949)

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This helpful publication contains the editor's appraisal of a large list of one-act and three-act plays for women published between 1944 and 1949. Especially recommended for the busy director who can't afford the time to search through many play catalogues. All leading play publishers are represented.

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#### The National Thespian Society

College Hill Station Cincinnati 24, Ohio

(\*Furnished free of charge this spring to all high schools affiliated with The National Thespian Society. One copy to each Troupe.)

### Portland, Ore.

**J**EFFERSON High School (Thespian Troupe 124): *The Adorable Spendthrift, A Child Is Born, Rip Van Winkle, Grandma Pulls the Strings*. The current season also includes the production of nine one-act plays, presented in three successive evenings for the purpose of raising funds, and the senior class play scheduled for production on May 12, 13. Seventeen students attended a drama conference held at the University of Oregon in February. Thespians are sponsoring a number of assembly programs this season, with troupe sponsor Melba D. Sparks in charge.—*Gloria Miller, President*

### Wichita, Kansas

**W**ICHITA NORTH High School (Thespian Troupe 136): *Seventeenth Summer, Sunday Costs Five Pesos*. Early in March a series of student-directed one-act plays were given on three successive days, with troupe sponsor Corrine Martin as supervisor. Titles of the plays given are as follows: *Bird on the Wing, Undertow, Perfect Gentleman, Strange Road, It Does Something for You, The Opening of a Door, Shadow of a Dream, Now That April's Here, The Ring and the Look and New School of Wives*.—*Sallie Duke, Secretary*

### Etowah, Tenn.

**E**TOWAH High School (Thespian Troupe 82): Plans are being made at the time of this writing for the production of a three-act play on March 31. Early in February dramatics students presented *Mama's Boy*, a one-act play. Dramatics club meetings, held twice a month, are given to the study of famous actors and actresses, make-up, costumes and outstanding productions of the professional theatre. About a dozen new members are expected to be added to the troupe by the close of the year, with Mrs. Norman B. Kirk as director.—*Lucille Rowland, Secretary*

### Liberty, N. Y.

**L**IBERTY High School (Thespian Troupe 109): *The Lovely Duckling, Christmas Is A Racket, The Mikado* (operetta). Stage terminology, reading and acting of one-act plays and the application of stage make-up are among the subjects considered at the regular dramatics club meetings, with troupe sponsor Ethel R. Rice in charge. Dramatics students acted as hosts to three nearby high schools, Martinsville, Ellenville and Fallsburg, in December, with each school presenting a one-act play.—*Cathie Sullivan, Secretary*

### ARTICLES ON STAGE LIGHTING FOR HIGH SCHOOL THEATRES

Arrangements have been completed by DRAMATICS magazine for the publication of a series of seven articles during the 1950-51 season on "Stage Lighting for High School Theatres". This series is being written by Joel E. Rubin, graduate student in the Department of Drama, Yale University. The articles are being prepared under the supervision of Prof. Stanley McCandless, nationally known authority on stage lighting. Mr. Rubin holds a B. S. degree in electrical engineering from the Case Institute of Technology. He has done extensive theatre work for the Cain Park Theatre, Shaker Heights Players and the Eldred Players of Western Reserve University.

—*EDITOR*

### Preston, Idaho

**P**RESTON High School (Thespian Troupe 39): *Arsenic and Old Lace, The Happy Journey*. At the time of this report plans were being made for the presentation of a three-act play early in April. Dramatics club meetings are held weekly under the direction of troupe sponsor Ruth H. Darrington.—*Ethel Beckstead, Secretary*

### San Pedro, Calif.

**S**AN PEDRO High School (Thespian Troupe 435): *John Loves Mary, Wilbur Faces Facts, Carasel* (traditional semi-annual senior class color-day original show), *Sweethearts* (operetta). Considerable time this season has been given to the study of Shakespeare and his works. A number of students from this school participated in the Southern California Speech Teachers Association annual fall speech festival in which students Vera Hearn, Sheila Cass, John Ortega and Carroll Hylton won high honors. Troupe sponsor Robert I. Rivera has succeeded in establishing a lively dramatics program at this school.—*Bessie Bartholomae, Secretary*

### Seth, W. Va.

**S**HERMAN High School (Thespian Troupe 212): *Bashful Bertie, Aunt Tilly Goes to Town*. Plans at the time of this report were being made for the production of a third full-length play to be given by the class in Public Speaking sometime in April. About twenty students are expected to receive Thespian membership this season. Laura D. Coon has charge of dramatics activities.—*John Morton, Secretary*

### Helena, Ark.

**C**ENTRAL High School (Thespian Troupe 597): *A Bunch of Keys, The Classroom Expands, The Bell Maker of Nola, Oh Romeo, The Lady of the Crossroads, The Twig Is Bent*. This is one of the outstanding seasons in dramatics being enjoyed by students of this school with Mrs. Gus Reichardt as sponsor.

### Sylacauga, Ala.

**S**YLA CAUGA High School (Thespian Troupe 842): *An Empty Gesture, Bunny Comes to Town, Three Days of Gracie, Operation Unity, We Shook the Family Tree*. Activities for this season have also included the production of several radio programs. Under the leadership of Nina English, Thespian activities have been re-established with seven students being honored for membership on March 6. Dramatics club meetings are being held once a month with the production of one-acts being the main subjects at these meetings.—*Jane Wheeler, Secretary*

### Pittsburgh, Pa.

**L**ANGLEY High School (Thespian Troupe 436): *Ghost Wanted, H.M.S. Pinafore, The Colonel Comes to Kansas*. Thespian dramatics activities this season are under the direction of Norman L. Rose.—*Norma Ostrach, Secretary*

### Lincoln, Ill.

**L**INCOLN High School (Thespian Troupe 225): *Girl Shy, Grandma Pulls the String, Under the Surface, Kidnapping Betty, Wilbur Faces Facts, Wilbur Takes His Medicine, Best Foot Forward*. Play reading and costuming are among the subjects receiving attention at the bi-monthly meetings being held this season with Clayton E. Wyatt in charge of dramatics. More than twenty students are expected to be honored with Thespian membership this season.—*Betty Kraus, Secretary*

### Plattsmouth, Nebr.

**P**LATTSMOUTH High School (Thespian Troupe 241): *Mother Is a Freshman, Last Night's Paper*. At the time of this report plans were being made for the production of a three-act play on March 30, 31, and the production of a one-act play later in the spring. The semi-monthly meetings of the dramatics club are given to the presentation of reading and the study of articles appearing in DRAMATICS magazine. New interest in the dramatics program has been created this season under the direction of troupe sponsor Jean Roadhouse.—*Dick Huenber Secretary*

Formal installation of Thespian Troupe 1023 was held on January 18 at the Dunbar High School, Washington, D. C., with Mrs. Maude B. Allen as Troupe founder and director.



### Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

S AULT STE. MARIE High School (Thespian Troupe 141): *I Remember Mama*. At the time of this report plans were being made for two performances of a three-act play on March 30, 31. A number of students have earned Thespian membership so far this season and others will qualify by the end of the spring term. Dramatics students hold three meetings a month under the direction of troupe sponsor Margaret Tomlinson, with two of the meetings held jointly with those of the Speech Club.—Bill McPherson, Secretary

### Paragould, Ark.

P A R A G O U L D High School (Thespian Troupe 149): The fall term dramatics program at this school was largely devoted to the presentation of dramas over Station KDRS, with Thespian Regional Director Mrs. W. J. Stone in charge. Among the radio plays given were: *Hearts and Flowers*, *A Mighty Mysterious Tree*, *A Doctor in Knee Pants*, *Benjamin Franklin and the Church Bell* and *The White Elephant*. A pageant in full costume was given at a local theatre in observance of the Christmas Season. Production activities for the spring term will be announced later.

### Elkview, W. Va.

E LKVIEW High School (Thespian Troupe 152): *Ann Drives the Car*, *New Wires for Old*, *Showboat Minstrel Show*, "Elks-a-Poppin" revue. Try-outs for plays, make-up and lighting are among the subjects to which dramatics club meetings are being devoted this season. Virginia E. Flint is serving as troupe sponsor.—Betty Jo McClure, Secretary

### Quincy, Fla.

G ADSDEN COUNTY High School (Thespian Troupe 160): *Come Out of It*, Christmas pageant. The fall term activities also included a special program written by dramatics students. Plans for this spring began with the production of *Overnight Ghost* in February. On April 11 the senior class play will be presented, with work beginning soon afterwards on the May Day program. The season will close with a Class Night program late in May. Monthly meetings of the dramatics club are given to the study of stagecraft, make-up, acting and the art of directing. About twenty students are expected to qualify for Thespian membership. Joseph F. Hull, Jr. is serving as troupe sponsor.—Mary Jo Fain, Secretary

### Iron Mountain, Mich.

I RON MOUNTAIN High School (Thespian Troupe 174): *Strictly Formal*, *Martin Marian* (operetta). Plans for this spring call for the production of a three-act play on April 29 and the production of a one-act play for a local women's organization. Bi-weekly meetings of the dramatics club are given to the study of stage problems. Steve E. Bordano is serving as troupe sponsor this year. Fifteen students have received Thespian membership to date.

### Brownsville, Pa.

B ROWNSVILLE Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 187): *The Rivals*, *Little Women*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Life With Luigi*, *Mayor for a Day*, *In Days of Olde*, *Cotton Pickens Revue*. This season's successful dramatics program has been highlighted by attendance to several off-campus productions including *Carmen* and *Anne of a Thousand Days*. An entry from this school in the Fayette County one-act play contest was given third place. The year's program has also included exchange programs with nearby high schools, with Thespian Senior Councilor Jean E. Donahey in charge.—Nancy Crawford, Secretary

MAY, 1950

### Butte, Mont.

B UTTE High School (Thespian Troupe 176): *Two Minutes to Go*, *Curse You, Jack Dalton*, *Four of Hearts Mystery*, *Cradle Troubadour*. Stagecraft, acting, speech, dictation and play selection are being studied as part of the program in dramatics this season. At the time of this report plans were also being made for the production of three one-act plays this spring. About thirty students are expected to qualify for Thespian membership this year, with troupe sponsor Helen B. McGregor in charge.—Helen Jolels, Secretary

### Paris, Tenn.

G ROVE High School (Thespian Troupe 198): *American Passport*, *Change of Heart*. This season's program includes a series of thirteen radio programs based upon scenes from *Little Women*, with a number of students participating. Bi-monthly meetings of the dramatics organizations are given to the study of current Broadway plays. About eighteen students are expected to qualify for Thespian membership by the close of the year. Dramatics activities are under the direction of Ruby C. Krider.—Joe Ann Seawright, Secretary

### Pana, Ill.

P ANA High School (Thespian Troupe 219): *Just What I Wanted*. Thirteen students have been granted Thespian membership so far this season with troupe sponsor Lily Ann Walters in charge. Dramatics club meetings are being held monthly.—Jim Chalfant, Secretary

### Canon City, Colo.

C ANON CITY High School (Thespian Troupe 246): *Uncle Fred Flits By*, *Tiger-Tales*, *Showboat* (vaudeville revue), *Why the Chimes Rang*. At the time of this report the senior class play, scheduled for production early in May, had not been chosen. Make-up, readings and other short skits are topics which are receiving attention this season at the dramatics club meetings held under the direction of troupe sponsor Virginia Leach.—Martha Spaulding, Secretary

### Fairmont, Minn.

F AIRMONT High School (Thespian Troupe 261): *Smilin Through*. At the time this report was made to the National Office tentative plans were being made for a program of three one-act plays to be given in March, with the playbill consisting of *The Pot-Boiler*, *The Opening of a Door*, *More Perfect Union*. *Children of the Moon* has been chosen for production on April 28. About twenty students are expected to earn membership requirements in the troupe by the end of this season. Marilyn Nelson assumed the post of dramatics director and troupe sponsor at this school with the beginning of the current school year.

### Abilene, Texas

A BILENE High School (Thespian Troupe 353): *She Stoops to Conquer*. Another highly successful production of this season was the arena style production of *Kind Lady* early in January. The audiences which saw the two performances were highly enthusiastic. At the time of this writing rehearsals were in progress for *The Long Christmas Dinner* to be entered in the spring contest. Among the off-campus productions which dramatics students have seen this year are *The Glass Menagerie*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Androcles and the Lion*, *Pygmalion* and *Macbeth*. Dramatics students are also appearing in various short programs over the radio and before local community groups. Ernest Sublett is largely responsible for the highly successful program in dramatics enjoyed by students of this school.—La Zella Perry, Secretary

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Scene from a production of *Letters to Lucerne* as given at the Williamson, W.Va., High School (Thespian Troupe 23) with Rose G. Smith as director.

### White Deer, Texas

**WHITE DEER** High School (Thespian Troupe 273): Thespians attended a performance of *Arsenic and Old Lace* given by the Amarillo Little Theatre during the fall term, with troupe sponsor Wendell Cain in charge of the student delegation. Thespians presented two highly successful productions of *Moor Born* early in December, with the third act from this play being produced later at a speech clinic held at the West Texas State College. A third production of the fall term, *He Aint' Done Right by Nell*, was sponsored by the Annual Staff.

### Onarga, Ill.

**UNITED DISTRICT** High School (Thespian Troupe 278): *Aunt Cathie's Cat*, *Her Christmas Wish*. At the present time rehearsals are being held of the play to be given on May 4 under the sponsorship of the senior class. Monthly meetings of the dramatics club are given to a study of stage make-up and reports on modern dramatists. Several students will have received Thespian membership by the close of the current season. Edna L. Snider has charge of dramatics this season.—Virginia Zirkle, Secretary

### Ronceverte, W. Va.

**GREENBRIER** High School (Thespian Troupe 298): *Bottoms Up*. A three-act play is now under rehearsal for presentation the latter part of April, with troupe sponsor Martha Ford directing. At the time of this report, rehearsals are also under way for the one-act play, *The Flattering Word*, which Thespians will present in the district drama festival to be held at Concord College on March 18. Bi-monthly meetings of the dramatics club are given to a study of types of plays and character portrayal. Seven students have received Thespian membership to date and ten more are expected to qualify by the end of the spring term.—Joe Kincaid, Secretary

### El Centro, Calif.

**EL CENTRO UNION** High School (Thespian Troupe 325): *Junior Miss*. Plans for this spring call for the production of the junior class play on April 14, and a third major production, possibly *Blithe Spirit*, to be given by Thespians later in the spring. Plans are also being made at the time of this writing for the school's entry in the one-act play contest scheduled for April 1. Troupe sponsor Mrs. Glenn G. Dunham has aroused much student interest in dramatics through her effective leadership. Several students have been registered as Thespians and others will be registered by the close of this season.

### Marked Tree, Ark.

**MARKED TREE** High School (Thespian Troupe 301): *A Date With Judy*, *The Divine Flora*, *On Vengeance Heights*, *The Caravan*, *Let's Make Up*. The fall term included four performances of the pageant, *The Child of Prophecy*. Articles taken from DRAMATICS magazine, readings and one-act plays are among the materials used for study at the regular dramatics club meetings, with troupe sponsor Marie Thost Pierce in charge. One of the current season's highlights was the trip several students made to Memphis to see a performance of *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* with Susan Peters. At the time of this report plans were being made for entry in the drama tournament scheduled for May 6, 7.—Betty Lee McGill, Secretary

### Corning, Iowa

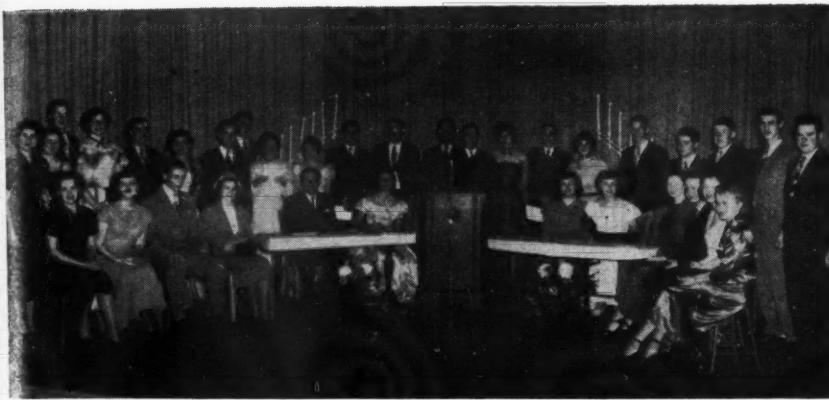
**CORNING** High School (Thespian Troupe 315): *A Case of Springtime*, *Pink and Patches*, *Our Town*, *High Window*, *Don't Take My Penny*, *The Valiant*, *Which Is the Way to Boston?* Dramatics club meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday evenings of each month. About ten students will be honored with troupe membership by the close of the season, with troupe sponsor Delmar Jeneary in charge.—Maxine McGregor, Secretary

### Lake Park, Minn.

**LAKE PARK** High School (Thespian Troupe 351): *A Little Honey Bobby Sox*, *Wilbur Minds the Baby*. Plans for this spring call for the production of a program of three one-act plays in March and a three-act play in April. Monthly dramatics club meetings are largely devoted to play reading and the study of acting methods. Nine students have been granted Thespian membership so far this season. The dramatics program is under the direction of Dennis Ottoson.—Doris Anderson, Secretary

### Johnson City, Tenn.

**SCIENCE HILL** High School (Thespian Troupe 365): *The Nativity*. At the time of this report the selection of a three-act play to be given in March was under consideration, with troupe sponsor Virginia B. Jennings in charge. Another interesting dramatics project of the year was the production of a special program in observance of Book Week in November, with several students participating. Twenty-five students are expected to win Thespian honors by the close of the year. Meetings are given to the reading of plays and the study of stage make-up.—Nancy Smathers, Secretary



This picture shows representatives from Thespians from three high schools at a joint initiation held at the West Linn High School (Thespian Troupe 870), West Linn, Oregon, with Troupe Sponsor Alexander Hayes in charge. Jefferson High School and Cleveland High School, both of Portland, Oregon, were the other two schools participating in the ceremony.

#### Jamesstown, N. Y.

**J**AMES TOWN High School (Thespian Troupe 384): *Great Expectations*, *Seven Sisters*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Seven Keys to Baldpate*, *We Shook the Family Tree*, *Pop Reads the Christmas Carol*, *Senor Freedom*, *Goodies Revue*. This season of well-rounded theatre activities has been under the veteran director, Myrtle L. Paetznick, whose fine work at this school covers many years. Thespian members have given part of their meetings to a study of the American Theatre.—*Grace Bloom, Secretary*

#### Salem, Ohio

**S**ALEM High School (Thespian Troupe 358): *The Late Christopher Bean*, *Say Uncle*, *Bobby, Pardon My Ancestors*, *Made-to-Order Christmas*, *Christmas Tableaux*. With Irene Layle Weeks as troupe sponsor and dramatics director, a special effort has been made this season to have dramatics students see most of the plays given by neighboring high schools. One of the most exciting trips was the one made to Kent State University, with three carloads of students in the group. Play settings and one-act plays are among the projects to which attention has been given at the regular dramatics club meetings.—*Donna Lee Schoss, Secretary*

#### Clinton, Iowa

**L**YONS Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 359): *The Spider*, *Little Women*. At the time of this writing plans were being made for the production of a three-act play in April, with troupe sponsor Charlotte Ziegler directing. Dramatics club members meet weekly, with plays, radio programs and school services in which the students may take part constitute some of the programs. Thirteen students have been admitted to membership so far this season and ten more are expected to qualify by the close of the season.—*Kay McClintock, Secretary*

#### St. Clairsville, Ohio

**S**T. CLAIRSVILLE High School (Thespian Troupe 429): *Year Ago*, *The Monkey's Pay*. At the time of this writing rehearsals were underway for the production of a three-act play scheduled for March 31, with troupe sponsor Dorothy A. Hancock directing. Dramatics club meetings are held three times a month, with the time being given to the study of make-up, theatre problems, ticket sales campaigns and the presentation of readings. Six students received Thespian membership in January and seven to ten more are expected to qualify by the close of this year.—*Betty Turner, Secretary*

#### Plentywood, Mont.

**P**LENTYWOOD High School (Thespian Troupe 360): *I Remember Mama*, *Ramshackle Inn*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, program of three one-act plays. Thespians meet monthly at this school under the supervision of troupe sponsor Robert J. Stickney. Some twenty students are expected to qualify for Thespian honors by the end of this school year.—*Marilyn Geelan, Secretary*

#### Wellsburg, W. Va.

**W**ELLSBURG High School (Thespian Troupe 372): *Wild Hobby Horses*, *Another Beginning*, *I'm A Fool*. The season has also seen special programs in observance of Thanksgiving Day and Christmas. Another activity of the fall semester was a trip to a nearby college theatre production, with troupe sponsor Faye Barnes in charge. At the time of this report fourteen students had been granted Thespian recognition. Activities of the spring term will be reported later.—*Patricia Cazin, Secretary*

#### Alton, Ill.

**W**ESTERN MILITARY Academy (Thespian Troupe 397): *The Stroke of Nine*, *When the Stars Fall*, *There Is So Much Good*, and *Fiat Lux*. Eleven students had qualified for Thespian membership by late in February, with Capt. Richard Martin as sponsor. Dramatics events of this semester include a full-length play and several one-acts.—*Charles N. Hatchcock, Secretary*

#### Northampton, Mass.

**N**ORTHAMPTON High School (Thespian Troupe 411): *A Day in the Sun*, *Willie Takes His Medicine*, *A Song Is Born*, *Senor Freedom*, *A Deer of Another Color*, *Follies of Fifty*. *A Day in the Sun* was given two performances late in March in observance of International Theatre Month, with troupe sponsor Agnes K. Thoms directing. Thespians and other dramatics students are devoting their meetings to the study of drama, make-up, and the presentation of plays. At the time of this writing plans were being made for the school's entry in the drama festival at Hingham, scheduled for April 1.—*Jayne Mundo, Secretary*

#### Superior, Nebr.

**S**UPERIOR High School (Thespian Troupe 337): *The Zoozah*, *Andante*, *Our Town* (tentative). About a dozen students will have received Thespian membership by the close of this season with Samuel P. McEvoy as sponsor. The dramatics club meets three times a week.—*Elaine Martin, Secretary*

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Samuel French  
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*Hansel and Gretel*, a legend brought to life by Lillian and Robert Masters. 6 w., 7m. Royalty, \$25.00. This is a charming retelling of the old tale of the woodcutter's children. In this a child has been changed into Mr. White Cat by Witch Wicked. When the children are left in the wood by their father, the cat watches over them, and leads them to a beautiful candy house of the witch, guarded over by the fence of gingerbread children. According to the story, the Witch is shoved into the oven to burn, the step-mother who has been forced to serve the witch is freed, the cat becomes a boy again, and the gingerbread children come to life to return home laden with the witch's wealth. This play is a charming version for all ages of persons who have imagination and a light touch in their acting.—June Lingo

*Caslight Gaieties*, a complete gay nineties variety show edited and arranged by Tom Taggart. Any number of characters. \$1.00 per copy with six copies giving production rights. Within a small volume are fourteen skits, monologues, dramatic readings, to be used with music and dances as the school talent permits. These are all given in a simple or elaborate Victorian setting, gay nineties costumes, in a definite order. This should provide a good possibility for high school students who want something different.—Myrtle L. Paetznick

Banner Play Bureau  
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*People are Funny*, a comedy in three acts, by Marguerite Phillips. 6 m., 6w. Purchase of twelve copies necessary. This is a rollicking story of family life with the usual brother-sister bickering over personal interests. It is a simple, wholesome-comedy of teen-age interests but introducing cleverly an adroit handling of the problems of race prejudice. A good choice for high school.—Helen Movius

*O Distant Land*, a play in one-act, by Stanley Richards. 7 m., 3 w. Royalty \$5. A deeply-moving play that is different but sincerely true to life. The scene opens at the ceremony preceding the demolition of old tenements to make way for modern dwellings. Among the honored guests is a successful poet and playwright who spent his unhappy youth in the building about to be razed. As his thoughts turn back, the scenes of his early struggles are revealed in a flashback, showing his reaching out to the distant land. This play was included in "Best One-Act Plays of 1948-49", edited by Margaret Mayorga.—Helen Movius

*Death Writes a Message*, a mystery play in one-act, by Ted Westgate. 2 m., 2 w. Royalty, \$5. This tense drama is depicted in six short scenes handled by blackouts. A wealthy chemist was presumably burned to death in an explosion which destroyed his laboratory. His wife, his brother and his sister suspect each other of plotting his death in order to inherit his fortune. Mysterious "murder" notes continue to arrive thus heightening the suspense. Not until the final scene does a surprise revelation force the confession of the guilty person.—Helen Movius

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.  
14 East 38th Street, New York, N. Y.

*Morning Star*, a play in three acts, by Sylvia Regan. 8 m., 5 w. Royalty quoted upon application. This is a revised edition of the play as first produced on Broadway in April, 1940. The action of this moving drama takes place in the

### PLAYS ABOUT LATIN AMERICA

A bibliography of plays in English about Latin American countries is now available free of charge from the Division of Philosophy, Letters and Sciences, Pan American Union, Washington, D. C. Spanish American plays now available in English translations are listed as well as plays about Latin American countries originally written in English. This exceptionally good list of plays is the work of Professor Willis Knapp Jones of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

—EDITOR

Felderman's home, on the lower East Side of New York. The play revolves largely around the efforts of mother Felderman to maintain some degree of order over the lives of her children as they go about trying to establish themselves. The action covers a period of some twenty-one years, from 1910 to 1931. Mother Felderman is a sacrificing woman, although it cannot be said that her daughters fully appreciate the many labors in their behavior. Daughter Sadie turns out to be a ruthless character determined to make her way to the

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Anyone interested in further information on the Festival, the Institute or the organization of the Puppeteers of America is asked to write to William Ireland Duncan, Head of the Department of Theatre, Western College, Oxford, Ohio. Mr. Duncan is the president of the Puppeteers of America and producer of the famous Tatterman Marionettes.

top of the economic heap, only to find that it does not bring happiness. The play is for advanced casts, yet if it is undertaken with some degree of understanding of what the characters are saying, this reviewer believes that it has excellent possibilities for experienced high school groups.—Ernest Baveley

Eldridge Entertainment House, Inc.  
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*Judy and the Colonel*, a farce in three acts, by James F. Stone. 4 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10.00 1st performance, repeat performances \$2.50. The plot centers around Judy O'Grady and a former boy friend Jack Green whose fiance Yvonne is extremely jealous. To convince Yvonne she is no longer interested in Jack she says she is engaged to Colonel Brown. Unknown to her there are two Colonel Brown's staying at the hotel, her Aunt Millie's former suitor and Martha Lattin's friend. Judy finds herself in quite a center of trouble and heart-break over her scheme to get Yvonne and Jack to elope. After a number of laughter-filled episodes the tangled romances are straightened out and the Happy Days Hotel lives up to its name. Suitable for high school and community theatres.—Jean E. Donahey

*Anything for a Laugh*, a comedy in three acts, by Robert St. Clair. 5 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10.00 first performances, \$2.50 repeat performances. Things move rapidly for the Ward family the day Fred Ward quit his job and tried to sell his land to Mr. Honsaker. Daughter Beverly's new theatrical boy friend Victor tries to help entertain the guest, and mixes his cues when he mistakes a caller for Mrs. Burroughs, Fred's competitor for sale of land for a factory sight. Victor, whose motto is anything for a laugh, finds his suit of Beverly blocked by the irate Father. Eventually the difficulties are settled and there are quite a few laughs for the audience over the younger daughter Polly and her steady Wilbur. Suitable for amateur theatre groups.—Jean E. Donahey

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